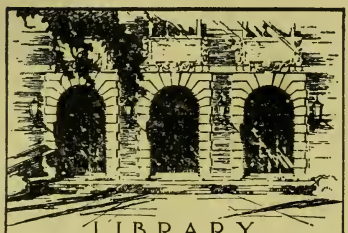

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THE UNKIND WORD

AND

OTHER STORIES.

VOL. II.

THE UNKIND WORD

AND

OTHER STORIES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN,"

ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLS.

VOL. II.

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BLIND.

I WAS walking along a rather lonely road, humming a tune to myself—a most indefensible habit, which I only mention as it accounted for my being suddenly stopped by a civil voice—

"Ma'am, if you please—"

I turned, and now first noticed a young man who had just passed me by. He was stepping out, quickly and decisively, with a stick in his hand and a bundle on his shoulder.

"Ma'am, if you please, would you direct me to ——?" naming a gentleman's house close by. I was proceeding to point it out to him, when I perceived that the young man had *no eyes*. It was a well-featured and highly intelligent countenance, with that peculiarly peaceful expression that one often sees on the faces of the blind; but of his calamity there could be no doubt: the eyes, as I have said, were gone: the eyelids closed tightly over *nothing*. Yet his step was so firm, and his general appearance so active and bright, that a careless passer-by

would scarcely have detected that he was blind.

Of course I went back with him to the house he named—in spite of his polite protestations that there was not the least necessity—"he could find it easily"—*how*, Heaven knows:—also, I had the curiosity to lie in wait a few minutes, until I watched him come cheerily out again, shoulder his big bundle, plant his stick on the ground, and walk briskly back—whistling a lively tune, and marching as fast and fearlessly as though he saw every step of the road he traversed.

"Have you done your business?"

My friend started, but immediately recognised the voice. "Oh yes, thank you, ma'am. I'm all right. Very much obliged. Good morning."

He recommenced his interrupted tune, and pursued his way with such determined independence, that I felt as if more notice of him would be taking an unwarrantable liberty with his misfortune. But his cheerful face quite haunted me, and I speculated for a long time what "business" he could be about, and how he dared trust himself alone, in the great wilderness of London and its environs, with no guide except his stick. At last I remembered he might be one of the "travellers" belonging to an institution I had heard of (and the foundress of which, by an odd coincidence, I was going that day to meet)—the "Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind."

I proceeded to pay my visit to this lady—whose name, having been often before in print, there can be no scruple in mentioning here—Miss Gilbert, the blind daughter of the Bishop of Chichester. To her superintendence and endowment, in conjunction with the design and practical aid of another blind person, Mr. W. Hanks Levy, this institution owes its existence.

Laudatory personalities are odious. To praise a good man or woman for doing what he, she, or any other good person recognises as a mere matter of duty, which, when all is done, leaves us still "unprofitable servants," is usually annoying to the individual, and injurious to the cause. And yet the root of every noble cause must be some noble personality—some one human being who has conceived and carried into execution some one idea, and on whose peculiar character the success of the whole undertaking mainly depends.

Therefore, without trenching on the sacred privacy which ought above all to be observed towards women, I may just say that it was impossible to look on this little, gentle-spoken, quiet woman, who, out of her own darkened life, had become such a "light to the blind," without a feeling of great reverence and great humility. We, who can drink in form and colour at every pore of our being, to whom each sunset is a daily feast, each new landscape a new delight, who in pictures, statues, and beloved living faces have continual sources of ever-renewed enjoyment—God help us, how unthankful, how unworthy we are !

Miss Gilbert and myself arranged that I should visit her institution, in order to say anything that occurred to me to say about it in print. "For," added she, "we want to be better known, because we want help. Without more customers to our shop we must lessen the work we give out, and refuse entirely the one hundred and fifty applicants who are eagerly waiting for more, and meantime living as they best can, in workhouses or by street begging. And winter is coming on, you know."

Winter to these poor—not necessarily belonging to the hardened pauper class, in many cases neither unrefined nor uneducated, since of the thirty thousand blind in the United Kingdom nine-tenths are ascertained to have become so *after* the age of twenty-one. It was a sad thought—these one hundred and fifty poor souls waiting for work—not for wealth, or hope, or amusement, simply for *work:* something to fill up a few hours of their long day in the dark, something to put food into their mouths of their own earning, and save them from eating the bitter duty-bread of friends, or the charity-bread of strangers. I arranged to meet Miss Gilbert the next day, at 127, Euston Road.

It was a house in no wise different from the other houses in this neighbourhood, except that outside its shop-door there hung a picture not badly painted, representing a room occupied by busy blind work-people. The shop itself was entirely filled with baskets, mats, brushes, &c. And there the only one of the four persons in

the establishment who is not blind, was engaged in serving a few—far too few !—customers.

No "sighted"—(to use the touching word which they have coined, these blind, in speaking of us who see, as if the use of the eyes were a great, peculiar gift)—no "sighted" person can enter this house of busy darkness without a strange, awed feeling. To be in a place where everybody is blind ! a blind housemaid to sweep and clean—and very well it is done too : a blind porter to carry messages : a blind attendant to show you through dim passages, where you meet other blind people quietly feeling their way, intent on their various avocations, and taking no heed of you. It is like being brought into a new kind of existence, in the which at first you doubt if you are not an unwarrantable intruder. You feel shy and strange. The common phrases, "Yes, I *see*," or "It *looks* so and so," make you start after uttering them, as if you had said something unnatural and unkind. Only at first. Soon you are taught to recognise that undoubted fact, recorded by both sufferers and observers, that of all God's afflicted ones there are none whom His mercy has made so cheerful, so keenly and easily susceptible of happiness, as the blind.

We went to the little parlour, furnished, like the rest of the house, with the utmost simplicity —no money wasted, as charities often do waste it, in useless elegancies, or in handsomely-paid officials. The only official here is Mr. Levy, the director, to whose intelligence and ingenuity

the working of the whole scheme—which, indeed, he mainly planned—is safely consigned. Under his guidance—the blind instructing the seeing—we examined various inventions, some of them his own, for conveying instruction in writing, reading, and geography, both to those born blind and to those who have since become so. He likewise showed us a system of musical notation, by means of which the blind can learn the science as well as the practice of this their great solace and delight. Simple as these contrivances were, they would be difficult to explain within the limits of this paper: besides, persons interested therein can easily find out all for themselves by application at 127, Euston Road, London: where, also, any collector of objects of science, fossils, minerals, stuffed animals, and the like—not subject to injury from handling—may give entertainment and information to many an intelligent mind, to whom otherwise the wonderful works of God in nature must for ever remain unknown. The delight his little museum affords is, Mr. Levy told us, something quite incredible.

Beside it, and more valuable still, is the circulating library of embossed books, for the use of the blind; among these is an American edition of Milton. How the grand old man would have rejoiced could he have foretold the day when, without interpreters, the blind would be taught to behold all that he beheld when, although

"So thick a drop serene had quenched those orbs,"

he was able, perhaps all the more through that visual darkness, to see clear into the very heaven of heavens. And when, to show us how fast the blind could read by touch only, Mr. Levy opened at random a Testament, and read as quickly as any ordinary reader some verses—which happened to be in *Revelations*—one felt how great was the blessing by which this (to us) blank white page was made to convey to the solitary blind man or woman, images such as that of the City "which had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine on it, for the glory of GOD did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Passing from this little sanctum, the centre of so much thought and ingenuity, we went to the work-rooms of the men and women employed in the house from nine to six daily. In the latter were about a dozen women busy over brush-making, bead-work and leather-work. The brush-making was the most successful, since in all ornamental work the blind cannot hope to compete with those to whom the glory of colour and the harmonies of form have been familiar unrecognised blessings all their lives. But it was a treat to see those poor women, some old, some young, all so busy and so interested in their work ; and to know that but for this Association they would be begging in the streets, or sitting in helpless, hopeless, miserable idleness—the lowest condition, short of actual vice, to which any human being can fall.

More strongly still one felt this among the

men: in some of whom it was easy to read the history of the intelligent, industrious, respectable artizan, from whom sudden loss of sight took away his only means of subsistence, dooming him for the rest of his days to dependence on his friends, or on the honest man's last horror, the workhouse. One guessed how eagerly he would come to such an establishment as this in Euston Road, which, offering to teach him a blind man's trade, and to supply him with work after he had learnt it, gave him a little hope to begin the world again. The skill attainable by clever fingers unguided by eyes is wonderful enough: but then the learning of a new trade *in the dark* requires of course double patience and double time. Nay, at best, a man who has to *feel* for everything cannot expect to get through the same amount of work in the same number of hours as the man who *sees* everything —his tools, his materials, and the result of his labour. The blind must always work at a disadvantage, but it is a great thing to enable them to work at all. No one could look round on these men, most of them middle-aged, and several, we heard, fathers of families, without feeling what a blessing indescribable is even the small amount of weekly work and weekly wage with which they are here supplied, to workingmen, the chief element in whose lives is essentially work: who in that darkness which has overtaken them at noon-day, have none of those elegant resources for passing time away, which solace the wealthy blind: to whom there is no

pleasure in idleness—or, bitterer still, to whom enforced idleness is simply another word for starvation.

And here, to make clear the working of this part of the Association, let me copy a few lines from notes that were furnished to me by its foundress :—

"Those workmen who know a trade are employed at their homes, and receive the *selling* price for their work, buying their materials of the Association. No extra charge is made to the public upon their work. . . . Those who are learning trades at Euston Road receive a portion of their earnings for themselves : the rest pays for materials and goes as profit to the Institution. The teaching of trades is a costly part of the work. Many of the learners cannot be supported by their friends, and are therefore boarded in houses connected with the Association—the money being provided by those interested in the individual, or by his parish, or in both these ways. The weekly terms are *9s.* for each man, and *7s. 6d.* for each woman—at which rate the managers and matrons of each house undertake to make it pay. They have no salary. In proportion as the pupil's earnings increase, the sum contributed for his board diminishes. In some instances the Association bears the chief cost. When he has learnt his trade, the Association may or may not employ him, or he is at liberty to start on his own account : but practically he is sure to ask for employment.

"The great object is to enable the blind, as a class, to earn their own livelihood, and to elevate their condition generally. If the sighted would help the blind by acting to them the part of levers, to raise them out of their present state, rather than of props to support them in it—the blind would most thankfully recognise that aid which they cannot well dispense with, but which they most prefer, because, in accepting it, they reduce their honest independence in the least possible degree."

This principle of the cultivation of independence is the greatest and best feature of the Association. Charity is a blessed thing, when all other modes of assistance fail: but till then, it should never be offered to any human being; for it will assuredly deteriorate, enervate, and ultimately degrade him. Let him, to the last effort of which he is capable, work for himself, trust to himself, educate and elevate himself. Show him how to do this—help him to help himself, and you will every day make of him a higher and happier being.

So thought I, while watching a lad of only twenty-one, who three years before had lost first sight and then hearing. Totally deaf and blind, his only communication with the outer world is by the sense of touch. Yet it was such a bright face, such a noble head and brow—you saw at once what a clever man he would have made. And there was much refinement about him too, down to his very hands, so delicately shaped, so

quick, flexible, and dexterous in their motions—the sort of hands that almost invariably make music, paint pictures, write poems. Nothing of that sort, alas! would ever come out of the silent darkness in which for the remainder of his days lay buried this poor lad's soul. Yet when Mr. Levy, taking his hand, began to talk to him on it—the only way by which the blind can communicate with the deaf-blind—he turned round the most affectionate delighted face, and caught the sentence at once.

"P-l-a plane. Lady wanting to see me plane? I'll get the board in a minute."

The voice was somewhat unnatural, and the words slowly put together, as if speech, which he could still use, but never hear, were gradually becoming a difficulty to him. But he set to his carpentering with the most vivid delight; and having planed and sawed for our benefit, again lent himself to Mr. Levy's conversation.

"Lady wishes to see my toys? I'll get them for her." And as nimbly as if he had eyes, the lad mounted to a high shelf, where were ranged, orderly in a row, a number of children's toys, manufactured in a rough but solid style of cabinet-making—the last made, which he brought down and exhibited with great pride, being a tiny table with a movable top and "turned" feet—a table that would be the envy of some ambitious young carpenter of ten years old, and the pride and glory of his sister's dolls' tea-party; as it may be yet—to children I know. How its maker's face kindled at the touch of the

silver coin, and the shake of the hand, which was the only way in which our bargain could be transacted.

"She's bought my table. Lady's bought my table." And then, with a sudden fit of conscientiousness, "Who shall I give the money to?" evidently thinking it ought to be counted among his week's wages, paid by the Association.

I inquired how much he earned.

"Seventeen shillings a week, and could earn much more if we only had it to give him. But even that makes a great difference. When he came, he was so moping and down-hearted, chiefly, he said, because it grieved him to be dependent on his two sisters. Now he is all right, and the merriest fellow possible. I asked him the other day if he were happy. 'Happy!' he said, 'to be sure I am. What have I to make me otherwise? It would be a great shame if I were anything but happy.'"

Poor soul—poor simple, blessed soul! the greatest man on earth might be less enviable than this lad, totally deaf and blind.

I have thus given a plain account of what I saw and heard that day. Any one with more time, more money, and more practical wisdom than I, could hardly expend them better than in becoming "eyes to the blind" by a few visits to 127, Euston Road.

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

"CHILDREN of Israel." The phrase bears one meaning when we see it in our Bibles, and another quite distinct and opposite when we use it of the very same people of whom we there read—that extraordinary people who remain to the present day, living witnesses alike to Christian and to atheist, that there may be some truth in that curious old Book which contains the history of their nation, the warning and subsequent records of its fall, and the prophecies of its final restoration.

Children of Israel. Let me premise a few words about them. Once, remarking to a very worthy and exceedingly religious lady of my acquaintance that I had been to visit a Jewish school,—"O!" said she: and within the circle of that magical letter was expressed a whole volume of surprise, pity, and even a certain amount of blame. As she and I never should have agreed in our opinions, and our arguments would have been like those of the two knights over the

double-sided shield, I quitted the subject immediately.

But it led me to ponder a good deal on the reasons why there is, and the secondary question, whether there ought to be, so strong a feeling still kept up among large masses of Christians against the Jews. Not merely against their faith, but personally against themselves. True, we do not now, like our mediæval ancestors, make raids into their dwellings, attack their flesh with pincers, bent on extracting teeth or money. We neither confine them within the limits of miserable *ghettos*, nor refuse them the protection of our laws. Nay, we are gradually allowing them to enter into professions, and take their fitting share in the machinery of the State. But, privately and socially, the sentiment of not a few of us towards them is much as it was in Shakespere's time.

Excellent Will—in spite of his noble protest, "Hath not a Jew eyes?" &c.—wrung, as it were, out of his own manly honest nature, which not all the prejudices of his time would wholly subdue—did a cruel wrong to a whole nation when he painted the character of *Shylock*. Yet, in spite of himself, the poet, like many an intelligent actor succeeding, has contrived to put some grand touches into the poor old Jew. Mean as he was, you cannot but feel that the Christians were meaner—that they returned evil for evil in most unchristian fashion; encouraged swindling trickery, and domestic abduction, in a way that was not likely to advance their creed in an

adversary's eyes: and even when *Doctor Portia's* quibble triumphs, and *Shylock* is dismissed to ignominy, the most excited playgoer cannot but be aware, in that uncomfortable portion of his being called Conscience, of a slight twinge—suggesting that two wrongs will never make a right; and that a certain amount of injustice has been done to the miserable old man, cheated at once out of "his ducats and his daughter," nay, of the very ring that "he had from Leah when he was a bachelor."

Far be it from any one of us, earnest believers in whatever we do believe, to allege that creeds signify nothing: that Jew and Christian, Brahmin and Mussulman, have an equal amount of truth on their side, and can harmonize perfectly; working and walking together like those who are entirely agreed. The thing is impossible. In all the closest relations of life there must be, on vital points, sympathy and union—at least as much as is possible in this diverse world, where Providence never makes two faces exactly alike, nor two leaves on the same tree of the same pattern. But each tree is made "after its own kind," and each nation or person also; and it is the best wisdom of us all to seek out and hold fast our similarities, rather than our opposites. The grand harmonies of life are produced by all holding firmly our own individuality—keeping *in tune* ourselves, without intruding discordantly upon the individualities of our neighbours. And when we find it distinctly written, "*In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteous-*

ness, is accepted of Him," we dare not judge our brother, who, for all we know, may be "accepted" as well as we.

Besides, is there not something unfilially profane—like the act of a man who delights in trampling on the graves of his forefathers—in the intense dislike entertained by many good Christians towards Jews? They may be, perhaps always might have been, a race no higher than other races, and inferior to some; but they are an eternal testimony to the truth of Holy Writ: the keepers of the Divine revelations of old. From them, and them alone, came the belief in one God, that in its sublime verity has outlived all pantheisms and polytheisms, and become a river of eternal life, which, however the corruptions of successive ages may have dammed it up, defiled it, diverted it into petty and ignoble channels, has flowed on, and will flow, to the end of time.

Surely it is strange—passing sad and strange—that the same excellent Christians who sing the Psalms of David, and believe implicitly in the Mosaic, historical, and prophetical books of the Hebrew Scriptures, should not feel a solemn interest in the poorest Hebrew who goes down our streets chanting his melancholy monotone, "Old clo', old clo'!" Is he not a perpetual monument of the dealings of the God of the Old Testament? Is not he, too, a son of Abraham?—There must have been some extraordinary twist in the mind of that good lady who is reported to have said, looking at Holman Hunt's picture of

the Finding of Christ in the Temple, "Dear me! how exceedingly profane! the painter has made our Blessed Saviour *exactly like a little Jew boy!*" Why—He *was* "a little Jew boy."

But enough of this. The days of religious persecution are over: we are coming to a belief that if truth be truth, it will prevail, without being propagated by fire and sword. Liberty of conscience—that right of every human being to serve God in his own way, provided that in so doing he does not trench on the rights of his neighbours—is every day more understood. The world has crept out of its swaddling-clothes, has survived the tumults of its impetuous youth, and is slowly growing into the full stature of manhood, as was meant by its Divine Creator. The law of reasonable, open-eyed duty is substituted for that of blind obedience—the religion of love for that of fear—the worship of the spirit for that of outward forms. And this—let us urge upon those of our Hebrew brethren who still deny it—is true Christianity; the truth which originated with our Christian Messiah—which, though taught apparently by one poor carpenter's son and twelve ignorant fishermen, has proved itself sufficiently Divine to revolutionise almost the whole world.

Believing in this truth—and that the children of Israel will see it one day, as well as many a Gentile, more hopelessly blind than they—we need not shrink from visiting Jewish schools, nor from holding out the warm hand of fellowship and sincere respect to those who

support them—even though, as many bigoted religionists would say, they have "denied the Lord." Denied Him, in a sense; yet not more so than many of those same religionists who think that they only know Him, and that all the rest of the world are doomed to eternal perdition. Surely, a far deeper and higher faith is that which believes He is able to justify Himself, and manifest His own glory, as He is doing every day in His own way and time.

Christians generally know so little of the inner life of Jews, that they are unaware how very much of the Christian element has introduced itself gradually and imperceptibly into modern Judaism; not only as regards social possibilities, but in modes of thinking; in a general, liberal, enlightened tone of mind, which has grown up among them since wiser legislation allowed that a Jew might be fit for something better than making money by old clothes or usury. The once-despised nation has lifted up its head, and shown what an extraordinary amount of latent power still lurks in the seed of Abraham, only wanting proper cultivation to find its fair level among the races of the earth. And though we may not agree with Disraeli, that every wonderful genius—musical, artistic, histrionic, or literary—must be either a Jew, or of Jewish descent, still, that a great number are is undeniable.

In this imperfect world we can only judge men by their deeds, and things by their results—clinging to and upholding good wherever we find it, knowing the Source from whence alone

all good can come; and therefore I think many devout Christians will be interested to hear of this school, concerning which my friend—who, I repeat, is a most generous-hearted and religious woman—gave such a doubtful, if not condemnatory, "O!"

It is the Jewish Free School, at Bell Lane, Spitalfields, London—the very heart of the Jewish quarter, and therefore comparatively little known to us Gentiles. You approach it through a wilderness of narrow and not over-sanitary streets, over every shop of which are inscribed such names as Salomans, Levi, Jacobs, Emanuel; while peering out of every door are faces—I must own rather grimy—bearing the unmistakeable Jewish physiognomy, as it is after centuries of degradation. They stare at you in unmitigated curiosity, as if wondering what on earth you are doing there; unless you happen to come in a carriage, and then they break out into grinning welcome, for they know that no carriages are likely to pass down those foul and narrow streets, except those of the wealthy and charitable among their own people. Some of these—so well known that I do not need to name them—gentle-hearted women, of gentle breeding, go about among the dark haunts of Houndsditch and Spitalfields as familiarly as City missionaries, devoting time, thought, and substance, in almost unlimited degree, to the poor and miserable of their nation; providing schooling, clothing, food; visiting from house to house the sick and the dying, and carrying on a system of unobtrusive,

deliberate, personal benevolence, to an extent that would put to shame thousands of us Christians who consider ourselves followers of Him who said "Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel* them to come in."

Entering the school, the first impression is that of passing into an entirely new world, or rather the ancient world revivified. Such a sound of strange tongues—for every child is taught Hebrew as well as English; such a mass of strange, foreign features, from the strongly-marked, sallow, almond-eyed Asiatic countenance, such as, variously modified, we may trace on Egyptian sculptures and Nineveh marbles, down to what we are accustomed to class as "the regular Jewish face," with long nose, sharp, beady eyes, full mouth—as little like the original Hebrew type, in its purity, as the St. Giles's Irishwoman is to the thoroughbred Celt.

Great as was the mixture, and low the class, of these children of Israel, there were among them faces that absolutely startled one by their beauty: little Rachels, Abigails, Hannahs; youthful Samuels, Davids, and Isaacs—faces that you might have pictured playing about under the palm-trees of Mesopotamia; or else, in their half-melancholy sweetness, sitting by the waters of Babylon, trying in vain to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land." Nay, so fine was the expression of some of them, that they might have sat as models for Holman Hunt's "little Jew boy"—as divine a child's face as ever was painted by mortal man.

So much for the artistic and poetic phase in which the school first presented itself. Now to give some idea of its practical workings.

Its 1860 children are divided into three schools—infants', girls', and boys'; the two latter being again subdivided into classes, the higher ones studying in separate class-rooms; while the juniors are taught together in large, lofty school-rooms, of which the boys' is shortly to be enlarged, being found quite inadequate for the number of pupils who attend.

But to the infants first. As all must allow, the ideal infant-school is a village-common or field. One would always rather see the little people cramming their hands with massacred daisies than their heads with the alphabet. But we must take what we can get: and to see these tiny creatures, well washed, well fed, well looked after, in a warm and admirably ventilated room, was far better than to meet them crawling about London streets, run over by cabs and omnibuses, or burnt to death in locked-up rooms. Probably their learning—which was shouted out in true infant-school chorus, following the instructions of a twelve-year-old damsel, with a gigantic "A B C" and a wand—is not so deep as to endanger the health of the young students; and, I was glad to hear, they are allowed an almost unlimited amount of play.

The girls' schoolroom, in which the pupils number 800, is ingeniously divided into compartments; every alternate compartment being occupied by a sewing-class, so that the noise of

those who are being taught orally is comparatively little disturbing to the rest. Hebrew, of course, forms a part of the instruction; but, as a curious involuntary indication of the different position of women in olden times, of which the shadowy reflection still remains in this school, it is not thought necessary to teach the girls more than what enables them to say their prayers—which must always be said in the original tongue—by rote. The boys acquire the language, as a language; the girls, merely the pronunciation, though they have the general sense of the prayers explained to them by an English translation. Still, grand as it sounds—this majestic Hebrew—the Hebrew of Moses and the prophets—we Christians felt that we would rather have the simple heart-cry of the poorest Christian child, who has been taught to say "Our Father, which art in heaven," or "Pray, God, bless papa and mamma, and make me a good child!"—ay, even though it dwindles down to what I once heard—the ridiculous, or sublime, prayer of infantile faith, "Please, God, cure poor mamma's headache, and give me a new doll to-morrow." Therein lies the great difference between the Jewish and Christian dispensations—the relation of God to us as *the Father*—not only the King, the Lawgiver, the just and righteous Judge, but the loving Father—as revealed in latter days through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

It was impossible to go through these classes of girls, both in the general schoolroom and the lesser rooms, without noticing how exceedingly

well taught they were: solid teaching, in which the reflective powers, as well as the memory, were called into exercise. Though in each instance of our visits it was no planned examination, but an accidental breaking in upon the routine of the class, their answers rarely failed. In history, geography, grammar, dictation, they seemed equally at home. Their reading was especially good; and any one who can appreciate the difficulties of a Cockney accent added to that of the lowest English and foreign Jews, will understand how surprising and refreshing it was to come upon *h*'s and *r*'s always put in their right places. This is, doubtless, mainly owing to the care and superior education of the head-mistress and her subordinates; some of them, who, like the others, had entered the school, not even knowing their alphabet, were as intelligent, ladylike young people as one could wish to behold. I saw one or two lithe graceful figures, soft gazelle eyes, and exquisitely-shaped mouths, that irresistibly reminded me of Rebekah at the well, or Rachel when Jacob kissed her and served for her seven years; "and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

Besides needlework,—cooking, laundry, and housework are taught to the girls; successive relays being taken out of the schoolroom to be initiated in those indispensable home-duties which are worth all the learning in the world to us women. Perhaps these little descendants of Sarai and Rebekah are none the worse for being

given less actual learning than the boys, and taught to imitate their wise ancestresses in being able to "make cakes upon the hearth," and "prepare savoury meat" such as many a man besides poor old blind Isaac would secretly acknowledge that "his soul loveth." The eight hundred little black-eyed maidens who are to grow up mothers in Israel may effect no small reformation in the nation, by being able satisfactorily to wash their husbands' clothes and cook their sons' dinners.

The general schoolroom of the boys is much larger than that of the girls: in fact, it consists of two rooms, communicating by a sliding door, and capable of being made into one large area, which yearly, on the Day of Atonement, is used as a temporary synagogue, and accommodates nearly 3000 worshippers. Even this space is not now sufficient for the number of boys who attend. Undoubtedly, there must be an intense love of learning in the children of Israel; for many of these lads, some of whom enter the school without even a knowledge of the alphabet, come daily a distance of four, five, and six miles, from all the suburban quarters of London. It was strange to see them—not, I must confess, quite so clean and wholesome and nice-looking as the girls, but with sharp, dark, acute faces—poring over their books and slates, or else sitting in rows, with their caps on, headed by a teacher who was also covered, repeating, *ore rotundo*, lessons or prayers in the sacred language; for they are all obliged to learn A, B, C, and Aleph,

Beth, Gimel together. This of itself shows how much vitality the school must possess. What would be thought of one of the English national schools, or even the Scottish parochial schools—where the educational standard is much higher—at which it was expected that the children of mechanics or farm-labourers should study Greek and English at the same time?

The exceeding discipline maintained among these small sons of Jacob (doubtless by nature as unruly as their forefathers whom Moses struggled with at the waters of strife) was very remarkable. At a signal from the head-master, all the hundreds of lads sank instantaneously into the most profound silence, which lasted until another signal bade them recommence their tasks—with a noise astonishingly like Babel.

Like the girls', the boys' senior classes have rooms to themselves. Here their education is carried on to a pitch which has enabled some of them to enter as undergraduates, and take their degree at the London University. The school has also been placed under Government inspection, and the Government system of certificated pupil-teachers is successfully carried out. These have extra classes, under the instruction of the indefatigable head-master; so that the establishment answers all the purposes of a normal school. Two scholarships are established; one in commemoration of the emancipation of the Jews—of which the last year's examination papers in grammar, geography,

history, Hebrew, social economy, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, and natural philosophy, are enough to drive an ordinary Gentile head to distraction. There are also two annual prizes in money, given in memory of deceased supporters of the school ; and a gift of fifty pounds has been bestowed yearly upon the cleverest, most diligent, and well-conducted girl in the establishment, by Sir Moses Montefiore, in remembrance of his late much lamented wife. Such charities, which make the beloved memory of the dead a perpetual blessing to the living, might well invite us Christians to imitate these generous-hearted, wisely benevolent Jews. It prevented one's smiling at a fact, that could not but be noticed in going from class to class of these very sharp boys, that their chief sharpness seemed to lie in figures. They did everything else uncommonly well : wrote from dictation a somewhat unintelligible poem of Shelley's with scarcely an orthographical error ; answered geographical questions and a long catechism on the principle of direct and indirect taxation, in a manner that showed their intelligent comprehension of the whole subject ; but, when it came to arithmetic, they took to it like ducks to the water. In lengthy and involved mental calculations, the acuteness of these young Israelites was something quite preternatural. You felt that they were capable of "spoiling the Egyptians" to any extent, not necessarily by any dishonesty, but simply by the force of natural genius. And charity—which would always rather see the

bright than the dark side of an acknowledged fact—might well pause to consider whether that astonishing faculty for amassing and retaining wealth, which is attributed to the Jewish community, may not arise quite as much from this inherent faculty for figures, added to the cautious acuteness which an oppressed race must always learn, as from other and meaner qualities which exist no less in us than in the Hebrews.

The less abstruse and more superficially refining branches of education are not neglected. In the highest class the boys are taught drawing, and vocal music from notes—also physiology as applied to health. Poor things, they must have small opportunity of converting their theory into practice! But one of the most noticeable points of the school was the exceeding attention evidently paid to the two most important necessities of youthful well-being in physical and consequently mental development—cleanliness and ventilation. In this low Spitalfields—this worst of all bad neighbourhoods—it was something wonderful to pass from room to room, and feel the air perfectly pure and wholesome, though with no more complicated system of ventilation than that very simple one which so few people can be got to understand—namely, of windows *always* kept a little way open at the top, so as to produce a gentle but thorough current—*not* a draught—above the children's heads. These little heads were well kempt, the faces clean washed, and the clothes decent, or at least well mended. To each boy and girl is presented

annually, by the bounty of the Rothschild family, certain habiliments to help out the poor wardrobe, those of the girls being fabricated by themselves, in the hour each day which is devoted to sewing. There are made also, from the same source, occasional additions to the scanty dinners which each pupil brings, or is supposed to bring. But these charities are carefully administered, so that in no case should the self-reliance and self-respect, which are the greatest safeguard of the poor, be broken in upon by indiscriminate or dangerous benevolence.

The pupil-teachers also, many of whom must necessarily know painfully the hard struggle it is for a girl to maintain a respectable and even lady-like appearance upon an income smaller than that of many domestic servants, receive annually, from the same generous hand, a serviceable, pretty dress: less as a bounty than as a kindly acknowledgment from the higher woman to the lower, of how exceedingly valuable is all true service in all stations of life. The cordial sympathy between the committee and the teachers, the ease of their relationship, and the heartiness with which all laboured together, in the bond of a common interest and common faith, was one of the pleasantest facts noticeable in the institution.

But I think I have said enough about this remarkable school, which, neither asking nor expecting any support from the general community, confines its workings strictly to its own

nation. To judge by the results since its foundation in 1817, when it opened with 270 boys, "to be instructed in Hebrew and English reading and writing, and the rudiments of arithmetic," its influence must be very great, and yearly increasing. How far it will aid, or is meant by Providence to aid, in that climax of the world's history believed in alike by Jew and Gentile—Sir Moses Montefiore and Dr. Cumming—when the chosen people shall be all gathered together at the Holy City, it is impossible to say. God works less by miraculous than by natural means, and it may be that the blindness shall be taken from the eyes of the children of Israel, not by a sudden revelation, but by the gradual growth of their nation, through the great remover of darkness and prejudice—education. Who can tell how soon they may be gathered, in the most simple and natural way, from all corners of the earth whither the LORD has driven them, and brought to Jerusalem "upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts," or as Dr. Cumming insists the original word *Kurkaroth* should be translated, "upon chariots revolving with the swiftness of the clouds," which may probably—odd as the coincidence sounds—indicate the newly-planned Syrian railways.

At any rate, whatever be their future destiny, it was impossible, without a strangely solemn feeling, to contemplate the growing-up generation of this marvellous people, who, amidst all His chastisements, have held so firmly to their

faith in the One Jehovah, and in His servant Moses. And when, having gone through the school, we paused again in the girls' schoolroom to hear their chanting—in which the well-known richness of the Jewish voice was very perceptible—we could not listen without emotion to the long drawn-out, mystical music, which may have been sung in the Temple before King David, of the Twenty-ninth Psalm :

"Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name : worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

"The voice of the LORD is upon the waters : the God of glory thundereth : the LORD is upon many waters. . . .

"The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars : yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. . . .

"The LORD sitteth upon the flood : yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

"The LORD will give strength unto His people : the LORD will bless His people with peace."

And surely all good Christian souls may say, "Amen and amen!"

GIVE US AIR!

THE following epistle and accompanying MS. speak for themselves :—

"TO THE AUTHOR OF," ETC., ETC.

"HONOURED SIR OR MADAM (whichever you be),—

"I understand you known writers are sometimes kind enough to read and criticise, and help to publication, us unknown scribblers, less fortunate, though possibly not less deserving, than yourselves. If, therefore, you consider the world would benefit by the enclosed paper, wrung from me by my intolerable sufferings of the last three months, may I beg of you to forward it to the editor of any publication with which you may be connected.

"I remain, your obedient servant,

"JANE AYRE."

("*N.B.*—The recipient of this letter has accordingly done as requested.")

I AM, I believe, no Sybarite, but on the whole a person of limited desires, nor overmuch the slave of luxurious habits. It troubles me little what sort of clothes I wear, so that they are clean, whole, and not ungraceful. I flatter myself I can dine upon any well-cooked food; and I am sure I can sleep calmly upon any couch

not harder than a deal board. In short, my nature is accommodating, and my wants are few. But there is one thing I cannot do without. It is to me more necessary than meat, drink, rest, leisure, and without it friendly and domestic companionship, intellectual and social pleasures to me are almost worthless. My mind gets soured, my temper aggravated, my brain obscured, and my moral sense altogether obliterated; in fact, I become an irrational and irresponsible being. This thing, this very simple thing, which yet I find such difficulty in obtaining, is fresh air.

Will any sympathising soul, or body, which recognises its woes in mine, yet perhaps is ignorant why it suffers, derive benefit from the indignant outcry, the piteous moan, which I feel impelled to make, after spending a summer in a region where, as to both the land and its inhabitants, one has every blessing which heart can desire, *except* fresh air?

This region, however, I decline to name; and though I protest that every lamentable statement concerning it is absolute truth, I mean to betray nothing that can identify places or people. Let those whom the cap fits wear it.

Nor does this pretend to be a scientific article. In my youth people were born and died, ignorant of physiology, social science, or the chemistry of common life. On such subjects my brain is exactly as useful as an apple-dumpling or a sieve; either nothing gets in, or whatever accidentally does get in, immediately runs out.

Though, as a matter of conscience, before writing this paper, I delved through three large volumes and five pamphlets on the science of ventilation, I understand it, theoretically, precisely as much as when I began to read. Nevertheless, practically—Stop a minute, while I open the window!

I breathe again. What a comfort it is to breathe! Alas, as Shakspere says,

> "How many thousands of my poorer brethren,"—

(or richer, rather; but I complain not of those who cannot, but who will not, have fresh air)—

> "How many thousands of my poorer brethren
> Are at this hour"—

Not "asleep," but suffocating; breakfasting in close parlours where the windows have never been opened since yesterday; or drowsing heavily in closer bedrooms, with the shutters shut, the curtains drawn, the door fastened, the chimney stopped, and the gas slightly escaping. The atmosphere—alas! I know well what it is! Poor things; poor things!

I left my home for a season. Home is home, be it ever so homely, and I love it, though I do not set it up as a model dwelling. Its ceilings are low, its rooms small; from attic to basement it boasts no ventilating apparatus whatever; nay, when I came into it, half the doors declined to shut, and half the windows to open. Even yet, some corners remain smothery and others draughty, so that I have ingeniously to induct unconscious visitors into particular

chairs, where I know they cannot complain of the atmosphere around. Therefore, let it not be imagined that my own domestic advantages rendered me over sensitive to the shortcomings of my neighbours, and the woes they unwittingly inflicted upon me.

The first woe came only too soon. Vainly had I guarded against it by weighing the merits of a first-class daylight journey, with easy springs and soft cushions, against heat, stuffyness, and a full carriage, subject to intrusions, at every station, of new comers, each of whom has his or her peculiar theory of ventilation. The result was, I armed myself with air-cushion and plaid, prepared to dash gloriously along, second-class, in the cool night mail. Face to the "horses," of course, that my only two fellow-passengers, happily neither ladies nor invalids, but stout, middle-aged gentlemen, might interfere the less with my chance of fresh air.

They did not, for half-an-hour. Then one of them shut his window, and carefully closed the ventilator above it. I trembled, but determined to hold on like grim death to my rights with respect to my own window. The evening went by, sunset faded into a pale amber line along the western horizon, the stars came out, and the fresh breeze of the midsummer night crept across the long flats that we were sweeping through at the rate of a county an hour.

My fellow-passengers ceased talking: each took out—not exactly his night-cap, but an apology for the same—and prepared to settle

to slumber. Each cast—I felt—an anxious glance at my half-open window, out of which I steadily and sternly gazed. At last the elder of them, with an abrupt—"I beg your pardon, but I'm apt to catch cold"—rose and shut it.

Alack-a-day! But he was an elderly gentleman, and I have a certain old-fashioned respect for age, and a dislike to make an enemy even for a railway journey; so I sat, patiently suffocating, for a good while—then opened my window about two inches—assuring my friend that it would not affect him in the least; and, lest it should, would he take my plaid? Grimly he rolled himself up in it, and went to sleep again.

Even with this compromise, the state of things was bad enough. Three people, in a July night, shut up in a small second-class carriage containing—how many cubic feet of atmospheric air? and how many more ought to be admitted therein, to replace the exhaustion of breathing, during a given time?—I'm sure I don't know, for I am not scientific. I only know I was choking: that when I happened to turn away from my two-inch wide breathing-hole towards the inner air—pah!

"The mouth of every human being, and of every other animal, is pouring the refuse matter of the body into the air. From it ensue cases of discomfort, of disease, sometimes of direct death. The surface of every animal is exhaling matter: cases of this may be shown in the odour of even human animals—the scent of beasts," &c.

So writes science, and I was experimentalising

upon it now! Still, matters might be worse; and I contented myself with staring at the dense black square of the window, and speculating upon the dark star-lit landscape through which we were ignorantly passing. By degrees, the black square changed to grey, and in spite of the carriage-lamp, a faint outline of the world without grew visible. We stop at one of our rare halting-stations. Woe is me! the second elderly gentleman wakes—rubs his eyes—shivers—rises up, and with the crossness of a half-awakened sleeper, shuts the window with a bang.

So, there we were. No help for it, but calm endurance. "The mouth of every human being" —But I might have preached a whole volume of science to deaf ears. No doubt the atmosphere was exactly what my two friends were used to. I hugged myself, with malign satisfaction, in the thought if they only knew how horridly ugly they looked when asleep! How their mouths opened inanely, and their foreheads knitted savagely; their breathing grew stertorous, two brick-red spots burned on their cheeks; big unctuous drops gathered all over their flabby, fat faces. How they tossed, and moaned and fidgeted—even though extended comfortably along the cushioned seats—not so ill a bed for any healthy man; and at last sunk into a stupor so heavy and ghastly, that one would hardly have marvelled had it subsided into paralysis, apoplexy, or death. Of course not. They were sleeping in a "vitiated atmosphere." Therefore they looked—Exactly as you look, my excellent

luxurious friend, about two, A.M., in your shut-up chamber, with your bed-curtains drawn, where, a few hours after, you are surprised to wake with a queer feeling on the top of your head, a heavy heat on your eye-lids, and a sense of general lassitude, as if you had not had half a night's rest, and it were impossible to rise at all.

Morning broke. "My friends," thought I, in an agony of suffocation, "necessity has no law. I must save you and myself against your will." So, with the stealthiness of a burglar, I let down a few inches of the window. The natural result ensued. The pure air, rushing into such a foul and heated atmosphere, created that horror of everybody—a draught, and the same ventilating current, which if by means of only an inch-wide aperture it had been kept up quietly and steadily through the night, would have made us all comfortable, became so cold that even I began to shiver. For my adversaries—But their wrath was spared me; they had come to their journey's end, and left the carriage to solitude and me. What I did afterwards, how I opened the window wide, wide!—quaffed insanely the fresh, bright balmy air, watched the outlines of the beloved hills sharpen in the dawn, and finally, with the wind fanning me, and the sunshine resting on my head like a welcome and a blessing, went peacefully to sleep—all this matters not. My first woe was ended.

The second was not long of coming.

If my wanderings had any definite personal plan, it was, to keep clear of cities. I always

hated them. Now, dislike had grown into morbid terror. I never passed through a metropolitan street without feeling first nervously depressed, then irritable, then positively wicked. One fortunate day a scientific friend enlightened me as to the cause of this—it was the want of Ozone. If asked to describe what ozone is, I can only say as I was told, that it is the life-giving principle in the air, which in ill-ventilated places and in large towns entirely disappears; and is found in the greatest abundance on mountains and at the sea-shore. "Therefore," said I, "to mountain and sea will I go. My search after happiness resolves itself into a search after ozone."

And where should ozone be found if not in this nameless region, with its grand estuary, its lovely coast, its waves upon waves of heathery mountains? Here, at least, I shall get my fill of fresh air! Ay, I did,—*outside*. But *within* the houses!

Let me be just to my friendly hosts. They were far better in sanitary matters than most of their neighbours. Their living rooms were unexceptionable: windows always open more or less, and no lack of that best of ventilators, all the year round, a good fire. During the day I was happy; but when I retired to my chamber at night, lo! the excellent domestic had, according to custom, closed the window, fastened the shutters, drawn the bed-curtains, and lit the gas. And in that all but hermetically sealed apartment, which, the gas being put out, would also

be left in total darkness, I was expected to pass eight mortal hours.

"What! you are not going to open the window?"

"My dear friend, I must breathe—by night as well as day."

"But night air is so pernicious!"

"Not half so pernicious as the air of this room will be, two hours hence, with the gas, my breathing, and the exhalations always going on from the very cleanest of carpets, clothes, and curtains." And I own to giving a rather savage pull to the beautiful moreen hangings under which I was intended to be entombed. "Why, if you were to hang up a bird in a cage within this four-poster, it would probably be dead by morning. I am not jesting: the experiment was tried. The foul air which kills a bird would likely not benefit me; so of two evils I prefer to choose the least."

And I undid the shutters, and threw the window open about a foot wide at top.

My friend regarded me as she would a person preparing to commit suicide.

"But the damp; the frightful night-damp?"

"I shall shut out the worst of it by drawing down the blind, which acts as a sort of respirator. Any how, the dampest night air that could be found, especially in July, is not half so injurious as foul air."

"Is it foul?" with a little indignation in the question.

Now, this is the greatest difficulty that, in my

humble character of ventilating missionary, I have had to contend with; people did not actually recognise when the air *was* foul. They had been so long accustomed to live in bad air that their physical (like, alas! many a moral) standard of purity had become degraded. Many a room that to me was stifling, was to them quite innoxious, or at least unnoticed. True, they felt its effects; they complained of headache, weariness, loss of appetite and spirits, and, above all, of the drowsiness which is the first sign of a vitiated atmosphere; but they attributed all these things to ill health or extraneous causes. It never entered their heads that the present evil was a want of fresh air. It never occurred to them that the reason why, enjoying life enough in the day-time, they yet complained of "such bad nights," and found such difficulty in rousing themselves of a morning, was because the air that circulates round a sleeper at night should be *exactly as pure* as that which he breathes during the day. He may defend his body with as many blankets as he likes, just as he would with overcoats by daylight; he may shelter his eyes from light, and his head from draughty currents; but he *must* have in the room a free circulation of absolutely pure air for his lungs to breathe; otherwise, during one half of his existence—the nocturnal half—he might as well be in a baker's oven, a coal-mine, or a church vault. And that is the reason why so many of one's excellent friends, when they come down stairs in the morning, look

exactly as if they *had* spent the night in either of these three rather undesirable apartments, instead of in an ordinary bedroom.

The substance of this long paragraph I preached to my amazed young friend, who yet could not reconcile herself to the fatal position in which she left me, as regarded the open window. "In our climate too! Think of the lung diseases so prevalent here."

"May not that be from the very reason I have been speaking of?"

"Because we do not sleep with our windows open?"

"No; but because, granted the severity or dampness of your climate, instead of hardening yourselves against it by lessening the transition between the in-doors and out-of-doors atmosphere, you make your houses perfect stoves of heated, gas-impregnated, impure air, and then you rush out from them into bleak mountain blasts and soaking rain. No wonder you catch colds, consumption, and all those sad diseases which, perpetuated in families, become the scourge of the whole country side. No wonder so many bonnie faces and stalwart forms pass away in their bloom, even here, in a region richer than any place I know of in sanitary blessings, if only its inhabitants were acquainted with and would obey common sanitary laws."

"But how can we begin?" said my companion, hesitating. "I really never did sleep with my window open—should have been horrified at such a thing; but I have a great mind

to try. How wide shall I open it? As wide as yours?"

"And then, from the sudden change, you will catch a severe cold, and say it was the result of my advice, and never open your window afterwards. No, my friend; sudden reformations are never to be trusted. Open your window one inch, and one inch only, for a week; two inches for the next week, and so on. The terrible punishment of any habitual infringement of physical as well as moral laws is, that habit itself being so powerful, even a change for the better, unless very gradual, sometimes, at first, does more harm than good."

Here catching a politely suppressed yawn, I thought it time to end my sermon. Whether it ever did any good, I know not;—but that is neither here nor there.

Alas, wherever I went I found texts for more homilies! Not among the rural poor, who pass their lives almost entirely in the open air, except during the few hours that they retire to the universal bed-place in the wall; an ill sleeping-place for healthy folk, and how the sick ever manage to recover in it—goodness knows! Nor yet have I a word to say against the wretched city poor; God help them; they *cannot* get fresh air. My complaint is lodged against higher sinners; people who ought to know better; mothers of families who keep their children in almost air-tight nurseries; mistresses of households who allow their young people to sit in the same parlour all day without once chang-

ing the atmosphere thereof; excellent old-school people who think an open window or a fire in a bedroom "a very unwholesome thing"—yet have no objection to send their delicate daughters from the warm parlour fireside to undress in an apartment that rivals in temperature the "frosty Caucasus."

Above all, I become fierce against the givers of evening parties; cruelly cramming a hundred people into a space which could only properly afford breathing-room for a score; of dinner parties, where, retiring from vinous and alimentary vapours below to the drawing-room above, we find it with fire and gas blazing, with every window, shutter, and door carefully closed, and in that atmosphere fifteen or twenty persons are expected to be "agreeable" for the rest of the evening!

Are they agreeable? answer, dinner-givers and diners-out. Think of the long "slow" hours where, with your head aching, your nerves unstrung, your brains just equal to giving a plain answer to a plain question, you, hostess, listened for the carriages being announced; and you, guest, enjoyed the fresh, cool walk home more than any portion of the entertainment. Not that the latter was dull, far from it; you may like your friends extremely, and own that they bring together most capital people; but somehow, they put you in an atmosphere where you cannot enjoy anything; where the brightest wit falls dead, the most intellectual conversation flags, where the mental pleasure is so over-

powered by the physical annoyance, that everything in you and about you becomes an effort and a bore.

Let me suggest the simple remedy of some friends of mine, who were telling me how amused they used to be with the remarks of *their* friends on their soirées. "'Really, how pleasant the evenings always are at your house; so different from other people's, even though one meets exactly the same set and stays the same time. Here, one feels so light and cheerful and ready to be amused; there, bah! one often goes to sleep.'—They never guessed," added the lady, with a smile, "that the secret of our success was, because, hidden behind a venetian blind, for fear of alarming the good folks, we always kept our windows a little way open."

But I must shorten my plaint.

Although the horrors of large towns, theatres, concerts, and social entertainments, may be eschewed by a devout disciple of ventilation, still there is one form of assembly which one cannot or would not desire to avoid;—going to church. Now, let me not be supposed to speak lightly of church-going; the solemn gathering together of Christian brethren to worship God. But He has given them bodies as well as souls; and why they should be required to worship Him in a house—consecrated or not—which is so ill-constructed and ill-ventilated, that these bodies are exposed Sunday after Sunday to a system of slow poisoning, and these souls so

weighed down by the oppressions of the aforesaid body, that they can neither comprehend instruction, nor join in prayer and praise as they ought to do ; why this should be I cannot understand. With all my love for the grand old Kirk of this land, its noble simplicity, its earnestness of devotion, I declare solemnly and sadly, during the last three months I have been in but one place of worship where a human being could sit through the prescribed hours of divine service without having devotion interfered with, temper tried, and health deteriorated to a very serious extent.

Country churches were bad enough. You passed from the glorious, breezy mountain road, fresh with heather and fern, fragrant with bog-myrtle, honey-suckle, and the small white Highland rose, into a low-roofed, barn-like edifice, which had been shut up all the week, and even now had only a window or two opened, to be closed again before the congregation assembled. This congregation, accustomed to its ills, sat contentedly stewing. Sometimes it fanned itself surreptitiously with a book or the end of a shawl ; sometimes smelled at its little nosegays of bog-myrtle, quickly withering in this hot, fetid air. And though the exhalations that arose made the place quite noxious, and the united breath of the congregation gathered in a dense mist on the window-panes, still it never occurred—not to the people of course, poor dear souls!—but to minister or office-bearers, that three inches of open window *at the top*, not the

bottom, on either side the little church, would have carried off foul air, let in fresh air, and prevented that sickly girl from fainting, that hard-worked, but delicate-looking man from dozing in his pew, getting a fierce headache, and being in a carping mood against the preacher and his doctrine for the rest of the day.

Town churches are little better. There is one, which I go to with the familiar love of many years—where the minister is a good man and an admirable preacher—yet I never "sit under" him, on afternoons especially, without having to resort to smelling-salts, frequent changes of position, and an agonized concentration of attention, in order to prevent going to sleep. My neighbours are no better off, they know not why; probably the pious of them blame themselves, the irreligious, the minister; while the real cause of blame is the noxious air. No wonder they never enter church till the moment before the psalm; and rush from it with that unseemly haste, pushing, scrambling, crushing—in a way that any English congregation, though perhaps not half so earnest, reverent, and sincere, would be ashamed of doing. In one church I went to—and never will again!—where the congregation were admitted by tickets, and stood thronging the aisles half an hour before the commencement of the—I was going to say the *performance*;—the minister must needs be a great healer of souls, if he can answer to his conscience for the evil which he inflicts Sabbath

after Sabbath upon a few thousand human bodies.

Surely, the Maker of both soul and body did not mean it so! Surely He who put the soul into the body, meant its temporary resting-place to be treated with deference and care. Surely, it must be pleasing to Him that we should learn how best to do this for ourselves and for others: that we should make our frames strong and healthy, our intellects clear and our spirits bright and brave, seeing that each and all are alike His giving, to be used for His service. We have, thank heaven, got over that false mysticism which believed that the enfeebling of the body was the enfranchising of the soul; we know now that the *mens sana in corpore sano* is the best offering we can make to God or man. And no waste labour is that which we spend, even in small matters, to attain this end.

But I am growing serious, if not stupid; probably because my fire has burnt low—the hour of the diurnal prandial meal approaches, and—and the atmosphere of my apartment is not quite so fresh as it ought to be. Let me obey the laws of nature, common sense, and experience; let me open all the doors and windows, and rush out into the glorious fresh air!

IN THE RING.

IT was a most difficult position. An invasion vi et armis, by six charming English girls, upon the house of an elderly Scotch doctor, of small practice, slowly diminishing, in an out-of-the-way uninteresting town, whose few inhabitants live upon anything and do nothing. Yet, such was my fortune, I, Adam Black, commonly called Uncle Adam, probably for the excellent reason of my being uncle to nobody, and therefore to everybody, including these charming girls who had now made a raid upon me. So happy, laughing, loving, were they; full of admiration at all they saw—Uncle Adam's house and garden, Uncle Adam's pony-chaise, and, they were pleased to say, Uncle Adam's agreeable society, that I should have been more than man if my heart had not speedily found itself riddled through and through.

"And now, uncle, since we mean to stay till to-morrow, how do you mean to amuse us?"

Of course, I would have done anything in reason, have given them a tea drinking; but

that would have driven my housekeeper crazy. Or a pic-nic, but ours is not the climate for pic-nics: being that identical part of the country when the traveller, asking, "Does it always rain?" was answered, "Na, na,—whiles it snaws." Or I would have invited half a dozen young men for them to flirt with—but there never are any young men in our town—besides, I dislike flirtation. I like a man or woman to fall honestly in love and stick to it, quite ready either to marry or to die, as may be most expedient. But people neither marry for love, nor die for it, now-a-days. Which is rather a falling off, I opine.

But to the point. I could not allow my visitors to waste their sweetness on my desert air, and gay and pleasant as they always were, I fancied towards nightfall they began to weary of my agreeable society.

"I'll tell you what, girls," said I, driven to sudden desperation by the youngest's proposing Readings from "Young's Night Thoughts," and "Pollock's Course of Time," by way of passing the evening, "I'll take you to the circus."

I saw a slight smile flit over three of the six pretty—well, the six nice-looking faces—for pleasant women always look nice to me. Certainly it was a long way to come from London to go to a circus in a small country town in Scotland.

But I assured them this was a most talented company, which had been in the town three months, and the troupe were highly respectable people (indeed, I had attended one of them pro-

fessionally, but I did not think it necessary to state this). Moreover, I had been there myself, with a small patient who wanted a treat, and had enjoyed the evening as much as the child did. In short, as I told them, if my "nieces," though such stylish young ladies, would only condescend to make themselves children for the nonce, to take pleasure in innocent childish folly (there was a most capital "fool," by-the-by), I would answer for it they would be exceedingly well amused.

So they put on hats and shawls—no need of white gloves and opera cloaks here—and off we sallied, through the cool bright autumn evening, to the quiet street where the circus was. A large wooden, temporary building. I had passed it often on my walks into town, but took little notice of it, and no interest in it; according to the commonly received fact, that one-half the world neither knows nor cares how the other half lives—till my accidental visit lately.

Since then I had often paused to listen in passing to the sounds within, the band playing and the horses galloping; to wonder if that bonnie bit girlie were still bounding through the flower-enwreathed hoops, and that agile boy turning somersaults after her, both on their "fiery steeds." Above all, what sort of thing was that "Wondrous performance of Signor Uberto on the Flying Trapeze," which had been announced night after night as the climax of attraction.

Poor Signor Uberto! it was he whom I had

been doctoring; he had had a sore hand, which incapacitated him from professional duty. He seemed a very quiet respectable young fellow, and his name was William Stone. Of course I did not think it necessary to tell all this to my satirical young ladies; besides, a doctor's confidence should be always sacred, be his patient a circus performer or a king.

We produced quite a sensation when we entered; such a large and distinguished party, who monopolised the reserved seats, and represented seven half-crowns of honest British money. On the strength of which, I suppose, we received seven distinct bows from the gentleman who received it, a very fierce, be-whiskered, hippo-dramatic individual indeed. I knew him, though I hoped he did not recognise me. He was the Herr von Stein, proprietor and manager of the troupe, and Signor Uberto's father. It had been privately confided to me that "old Stone," as he was called in private life, was as hard as a flint, and he looked it. He grasped the half-crowns as if they were pound-notes, or twenty-pound notes, and crammed them into his pocket immediately.

The performances had already begun. From boxes and gallery were stretched out a mass of those honest eager faces which always make a minor theatre, or an accidental dramatic entertainment in the provinces, so very amusing. At least to me; for I have seen so much of the dark side of life, that I like to see people happy, even for an hour, in any innocent way. There is a strong feeling in Scotland against "play-acting,"

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but apparently the prejudice did not extend to quadrupedal performances, for I noticed a large gathering of the working and trading class in our town, with their wives and families. All were intently watching the careering round and round that magic "ring" of two beautiful horses, ridden by a boy and girl in the character of the "Highland Laddie and Lassie."

Ridden did I say? It was more like floating, flying, dancing—in and out, up and down—twirling and attitudinising, in one another's arms—changing horses—galloping wildly—both on one horse. The boy was slim and graceful—the girl—nay, she was a perfect little fairy, with her white frock, her tartan scarf, and the hood tying back her showers of light curly hair, that tossed, and whirled, and swirled, in all directions. Whether she stood, knelt, balanced herself on one leg, or wreathed herself about, in the supple way that these gymnasts do, she was equally picturesque. Not over-like a Highland lassie, such as one sees digging potatoes in Perthshire, but still a most fascinating something else. The little creature seemed to enjoy it so herself; smiled, not with the dancer's stereotyped grin, but a broad honest childish smile, as she leaped down, made her final curtsey, and bounded along through the exit under the boxes.

There—among the group which seemed always hanging about there—the ring-master, the clown, and one or two young men—there crept forward a figure in black, a young woman, who met the Highland fairy, threw a shawl over her, and

carried her off; a performance not set down in the bills, but which seemed to entertain the audience exceedingly.

The next diversion was a "Feat on Bottles, by Monsieur Ariel," who shall here go down to posterity as a proof of the many ingenious ways in which a man can earn a livelihood if he chooses. Two dozen empty bottles—ordinary "Dublin Stout"—are arranged in a double line across a wooden table. Enter a little fat man, in tights, and an eccentric cap, who bows, springs upon the table, and with a solemn and anxious countenance proceeds to step, clinging with his two feet, on to the shoulders of two of the bottles. This is Monsieur Ariel. He walks from bottle to bottle, displacing none, and never once missing his footing, till he reaches the end of the double line, then slowly turns, still balancing himself with the utmost care, as is necessary, and walks back again amidst thunders of applause. He then, after pausing, and wiping his anxious brows, proceeds to several other feats, the last of which consists in forming the bottles into a pyramid, setting a chair on top of them, where he sits, stands, and finally poises himself on his head for a second, to the breathless delight of all observers, turns a somersault, bows—and exit Monsieur Ariel. He has earned his nightly wage, and a tolerably hard-earned wage it is, to judge by his worn countenance.

But I cannot specify each of the performances, though, I confess, after-events photographed them all sharply on my mind. So that I still

can see the "Dashing Act on a Bare-backed Horse," which was a series of leaps, backwards and forwards, turning and twisting, riding the beast in every sort of fashion, and on every part of him, except his ears and his tail; indeed, I think the equestrian gymnast was actually swept round the ring once or twice, clinging with arms and legs to the creature's neck. And the "Comic Performing Mules!" how delicious they were in their obstinacy! Perfectly tame and quiet, till one of the audience, by invitation, attempted to get on their backs, when, by some clever evolution, they gently slipped him over their noses, and left him biting the ignominious sawdust. One only succeeded—a youth in a groom's dress—who, after many failures, rode the mules round the ring; on which there was great triumph in the gallery, which felt that "our side" had won. For me—I doubt; since did I not in the next scene, the "Grand Hippo-dramatic Spectacle, entitled Dick Turpin's Ride to York," behold that identical youth, red-headed and long-nosed, attired, not as a groom of the nineteenth century, but as a highwayman of the seventeenth, and managing a beautiful bay horse, at least as cleverly as he did the Performing Mule?

This Ride to York—my nieces remember it still—and declare that Robson—alas, poor Robson!—could not have acted *Dick Turpin* better. And for Black Bess, her acting was beautiful, or rather it was not acting, but obeying. The way the mare followed her master about,

leaped the turnpike at Hornsey, crawled into the ring again—supposed near York—with her flanks all flecked with foam (and white chalk), drank the pail of brandy and water, and ate the raw beefsteak, was quite touching. When, at last, she sank down, in a wonderful simulation of dying, and poor Dick, in a despairing effort to rouse her, struck her with the whip—my eldest niece winced, and muttered involuntarily, "Oh, how cruel!"—And when, after a futile struggle to obey and rise, poor Black Bess turned, licked Turpin's coat-sleeve, and dropped with her head back, prone, stiff, and dead—most admirably dead—my youngest niece, a tender-hearted lassie, freely acknowledges that—she cried!

The last entertainment of the evening was the Flying Trapeze.

Not everybody knows what a trapeze is; a series of handles, made of short poles suspended at either end by elastic ropes, and fastened to the roof, at regular intervals, all across the stage. These handles are swung to and fro by the performer or his assistant; and the feat is to catch each one, swing backwards and forwards with it, and then to spring on to the next one, producing to the eyes of the audience, for a brief second or two, exactly the appearance of flying. Of course the great difficulty lies in choosing the precise moment for the spring, and calculating accurately your grasp of the next handle, since, if you missed it——

"Ah," said my eldest niece, with a slight

shudder, "now I see the meaning of those mattresses, which they are laying so carefully under the whole line of the trapeze. And I understand why that man, who walks about giving directions, is so very particular in seeing that the handles are fastened securely. He looks anxious too, I fancy."

"Well he may. He is Signor Uberto's father."

"Then is it anything very dangerous, or frightful? Perhaps we had better go?"

But it was too late, or we fancied it was. Besides, for myself, I did not wish to leave. That strange excitement which impels us often to stop and see the end of a thing, dreadful though it may be, or else some feeling for which I was utterly unable to account, kept me firm in my place. For just then, entering quickly by the usual door, appeared a small slight young man, who looked a mere boy indeed, and in his white tight-fitting dress, that showed every muscle of an exceedingly delicate and graceful frame, was a model for a sculptor. He had long light hair, tied back with a ribbon, after the fashion of acrobats, and thin pale features, very firm and still. This was the Signor Uberto, who was going once more to risk his life—as every trapeze performer must risk it—for our night's amusement.

He stood, while his father carefully tried the fastenings of each handle, and examined the platform on which were laid the mattresses. But the youth himself did not look at anything.

Perhaps he was so accustomed to it that the performance seemed to him safe and natural—perhaps he felt it was useless to think whether it were so or not, since he must perform. Or, possibly, he took all easily, and did not think of anything.

But I could not help putting myself into the place of the young man, and wondering whether he really did recognise any danger; more especially as I saw, lurking and watching in the exit corner, somebody belonging to him—the young woman in black, who was his sister, I concluded, since when I visited him she had brought lint and rags and helped me to tie up his sore hand. Over this hand the father was exceedingly anxious, because every day's loss of performance was a loss to the treasury. This was the first day of the signor's reappearance, and the circus was full to the roof.

Popularity is seldom without a reason, and I do not deny that the flying trapeze is a very curious and even beautiful sight. In this case the extreme grace of the performer added to its charm. He mounted, agile as a deer, the high platform at the end of the circus, and swung himself off by the elastic ropes, clinging only with his hands, his feet extended, like one of the floating figures in pictures of saints or fairies. His father, standing opposite, and watching intently his time—for a single second might prove either too late or too soon—threw the other trapeze forward to meet him. The young man dropped lightly into it, hanging a moment between whiles, apparently as easily as if he had

been born to fly, then gave himself another swing, and alighted safely at the far end of the platform.

This feat he accomplished twice, thrice, four times, each time with some slight variation, and more gracefully than the last, followed by a low murmur of applause—the people were too breathless to shout. The fifth time, when one had grown so familiar with the performance that one had almost ceased to shudder, and begun to regard the performer not as a human creature at all, with flesh and blood and bones, but as some painted puppet, or phantasmal representation on a wall—the fifth time he missed his grasp of the second trapeze, and fell.

It was so sudden ;—one moment the sight of that flying figure—the next, a crash on the mattressed platform, on its edge, from which rolled off a helpless something, falling with a heavy thud on the sawdust floor below.

I heard a scream—it might be from one of my girls, but I could not heed them. Before I well knew where I was, I found myself with the young man's head on my knee, trying to keep off the crowd that pressed round.

"Is he dead ?"

"Na, na—he's no deid. Give him some whisky. He's coming to, puir laddie."

But he did not "come to," not for hours, until I had him taken to the nearest available place—which happened to be my own house, for his lodgings were at the other end of the town.

All the long night that I sat by the poor young man's bedside, I felt somehow as if I had murdered him, or helped to do it. For had I not "followed the multitude to do evil," added my seven half-crowns to tempt him, or rather the skin-flint father who was making money by him, to risk his life for our amusement? True, he would have done it all the same had I not been there; but still I was there. I and my young ladies had swelled the number which had lured him on to his destruction,—and I felt very guilty. What the girls felt, poor dears, I do not know; it was quite impossible for me to take any heed of them. My whole attention was engrossed by the case. I wonder if people suppose us surgeons hardened because we get into the habit of speaking of our fellow-creatures merely as "a case?"

No one hindered my doing what I would with my patient, so I had him removed to my own room—the spare rooms being occupied—examined him, and set a simple fracture of the arm, which was the only visible injury. Then I sat and watched him, as conscience-stricken as if I had been one of the old Roman emperors at a gladiator show, or a modern Spanish lady at a bull-fight, or a fast young English nobleman hiring rooms at the Old Bailey in order to witness a judicial murder. For had I not sat calmly by, a spectator of what was neither more nor less than murder?

Somebody behind me seemed to guess at my thought.

"If he had died, doctor, I should always have said he had been murdered."

There was an intensity in the voice which quite startled me, for she had kept so quietly in the background that I had scarcely noticed her till now—the young woman in black. She was not a pretty young woman—perhaps not young at all—being so deeply pitted with small-pox that her age became doubtful to guess at; but she had kind soft eyes, an intelligent forehead, and an excessively sweet English voice.

If there is one thing more than another by which I judge a woman, it is her voice; not her set "company" voice, but the tone she speaks in ordinarily or accidentally. *That* never deceives. Looks may. I have known fair-faced blue-eyed angels, and girls with features as soft and lovely as houris, who could talk in most dulcet fashion till something vexed them, and then out came the hard metallic ring, which always indicates that curse of womahood—worst of all faults except untruthfulness — *temper*. And I have heard voices, belonging to the plainest of faces, which were deep and soft, and low like a thrush's in an April garden. I would rather marry the woman that owned such a voice than the prettiest woman in the world.

This young woman had one, and I liked her instantaneously.

"Who are you, my dear?" I whispered. "His sister?"

"He has none—nor brother either."

"His cousin, then?"

"No."

I looked my next question, and she answered it with a simple honesty I expected from the owner of that voice.

"William and I were playfellows; then we kept company five years, and meant to be married next month. His father was against it, or it would have been sooner. But Willie wished to stop trapezing and settle in some other line; and Old Stone wanted money, and wouldn't let him go. At last they agreed for six more performances, and this was the first of the six."

"He'll never perform more," said I, involuntarily.

"No, he couldn't with that arm. I am very thankful for it," said she, with a touching desperate clutch at the brightest side of things.

How could I tell her what I began every hour more to dread, that the broken arm was the least injury which had befallen the young man; that I feared one of those concussions to the spine, which are often produced by a fall from a height, or a railway injury, and which, without any external wound, cripples the sufferer for years or for life?

"No, he never shall do anything o' that sort again," continued she. "Father or no father, I'll not have him murdered." And there came a hard fierceness into her eyes, like that of a creature who has long been hunted down, and at last suddenly turns at bay.

"Where is his father? he has not come near him."

"Of course not. He's a precious coward is Old Stone, and as sharp as a needle after money or at keeping away when money's likely to be wanted. But don't be afraid. I've myself got enough to pay you, sir. That's all the better. He is *my* William now."

This was the most of our conversation, carried on at intervals, and in whispers, during the night. My fellow-watcher sat behind the curtain, scarcely moving, except to do some feminine office, such as building up the fire noiselessly, coal by coal, as nurses know how, or handing me anything I required of food or medicine. Or else she sat motionless; with her eyed fixed on the death-white face; but she never shed a tear. Not till, in the dawn of morning, the young man woke up in his right senses, and spoke feebly, but articulately.

"Doctor, thank you. I knew you, and I know what's happened. Only, just one word. I want Dorothy. Please fetch Dorothy."

"Yes, Willie," spoken quite softly and composedly. "Yes, Willie. I'm here."

It was a difficult case. The first-rate Edinburgh surgeon, whom, doubting my own skill, I called in next day, could make nothing of it. There were no injuries, external or internal, that could be traced, except the broken arm; the young man lay complaining of nothing, perfectly conscious and rational, but his lower limbs were apparently paralysed.

We sent for a third doctor; he, too, was puzzled; but he said he had known one such case, where, after a railway accident, a man had been brought home apparently uninjured, though having received some severe nervous shock, probably to the spine. He had been laid upon his bed, and there he lay yet, though it was years ago; suffering little, and with all his faculties clear, but totally helpless; obliged to be watched over and waited upon like an infant, by his old wife.

"For he was an old man, and he had a wife, which was lucky for him," added the doctor. "It's rather harder for that poor young fellow, who may have to lie as he does now for the rest of his days."

"Hush!" I said, for he was talking loud in the passage, and close behind us stood poor Dorothy. I hoped she had not heard, but the first sight of her face convinced me she had; every syllable we had spoken; only women have at times a self-control that is almost awful to witness.

Whether it was that I was afraid to meet her, I do not know, but I stepped quickly out of the house, and walked a mile or more to the railway station with my two friends. When I returned, the first thing I saw was Dorothy, waiting on the stair-head, with my housekeeper beside her. For, I should observe, that good woman did not object nearly so much to a poor dying lad as to an evening party, and had taken quite kindly to Dorothy.

Yes, she had heard it all, poor girl, and I could

not attempt to deceive her; indeed I felt by instinct that she was a person who could not be deceived; one to whom it was best to tell the whole truth; satisfied that she would bear it. She did, wonderfully. Of course I tempered it with the faint consolation, that doctors are sometimes mistaken, and that the young man had youth on his side; but there the truth was, blank and bare, nor did I pretend to hide it.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Thank you for telling me all. My poor William!"

I took her into the parlour, and gave her a glass of wine.

"*I* don't need it, sir; I'm used to sick-nursing. I nursed my sister till she died. We were dressmakers, and then William got me as costume-maker to the circus. I can earn a good deal by my needle, sir."

This seemed far away from the point, and so did her next remark.

"His father won't help him, sir, you'll see, not a halfpenny. He's got another—wife he calls her, and a lot of other children, and doesn't care twopence for William."

"Poor fellow!"

"He isn't a poor fellow," she answered, sharply, "he's a very clever fellow; can read, and write, and keep accounts; he was thinking of trying for a clerk's situation. With that, and my dressmaking, we should have done very well, if we had once been married."

I hardly knew what to answer. I felt so exceedingly sorry for the poor girl, and yet she

did not seem to feel her affliction. There was a strange light in her eyes, and a glow on her poor plain face, very unlike one whose whole hopes in life had just been suddenly blasted.

"Doctor," the voice went to my heart despite its bad grammar, and horrible English pronunciation, dropped h's and all, "may I speak to you, for I've nobody else, not a soul belonging to me, but William. Will you let him stop here for a week or two?"

"A month, if necessary."

"Thank you. He shall be no trouble to you; I'll take care of that. Only, there's one thing to be done first. Doctor, I must marry William."

She said it in such a matter-of-fact tone, that at first I doubted if I had rightly heard.

"Marry him? Good Heavens! You don't mean——"

"Yes I do, sir. Just that."

"Why, he will never be able to do a hand's turn of work for you—may never rise from his bed; will have to be tended like an infant for months, and may die after all."

"No matter, sir. He'd rather die with me than with anybody. William loves me. I'll marry him."

There was a quiet determination about the woman which put all argument aside. And truly if I must confess it, I tried none. I am an old-fashioned fellow, who never was so happy as to have any woman loving me; but I have known enough of women to feel surprised at

nothing they do, of this sort. Besides, I thought, and think still, that Dorothy was right, and that she did no more than was perfectly natural under the circumstances.

"And now, sir, how is it to be managed?"

Of course the sooner it was managed the better, and I found, on talking with her, that she had already arranged it all in her own mind. She had lived long enough in Scotland to be aware that a Scotch irregular marriage was easy enough; simply by the parties declaring themselves husband and wife before witnesses; but still her English feelings and habits clung to a marriage "by a proper clergyman." She was considerably relieved when I explained to her that if she put in the banns that Friday night—they might be "cried" on Sunday in the parish kirk, and married by my friend the minister, to whom I would explain the matter, on Monday morning.

"That will do," she said. "And now I must go up-stairs and speak to William."

What she said to him, or how he received it, is impossible for me to relate. Neither told me anything, and I did not inquire. It was not my business; indeed, it was nobody's business but their own.

Now, though I may be a very foolish old fellow, romantic, with the deep-seated desperate romance which, my eldest niece avers, underlies the hard and frigid Scotch character (I suspect she has her own reasons for studying it so deeply), still, I am not such a fool as I appear.

Though I did take these young people into my house, and was quite prepared to assist at their marriage, considering it the best thing possible for both under the circumstances, still I was not going to let them be married without having fully investigated their antecedents.

I went to the circus, and there tried vainly to discover the Herr von Stein, whose black-bearded head I was sure I saw slipping away out of the ring, where the "Highland Lassie," in a dirty cotton frock, and a dirtier face, was careering round and round on her beautiful horse, while in the centre, on the identical table of the night before—what an age it seemed ago!—a little fat man in shirt-sleeves and stocking soles was walking solitarily and solemnly upon bottles.

From him—Monsieur Ariel, who had been inquiring more than once at my house to-day, leaving his name as "Mr. Higgins"—I gained full confirmation of Dorothy Hall's story. She and William Stone were alike respectable and well-conducted young people, and evidently great favourites in the establishment. Then, and afterwards, I also learnt a few other facts, which people are slow to believe everywhere, especially in Scotland, namely, that it is quite possible for "play-actors," and even circus performers, to be very honest and decent folk; and that, in fact, it does not do to judge of anybody by his calling, but solely by himself and his actions.

I hope, therefore, that I am passing no uncharitable judgment on the Herr von Stein, if

I simply relate what occurred between us, without making any comment on his actions.

Finding he could not escape me, and that I sent message after message to him, he at last returned into the ring, and there—while the horses still went prancing round, the little girl continued her leaping, and we caught the occasional click-click of Monsieur Ariel practising among his bottles—the father stood and heard what I had to tell him concerning his son.

He was a father, and he seemed a good deal shocked, for about three minutes. Then he revived.

"It's very unfortunate, doctor, especially so for me, with my large family. What am I to do with him? What," becoming more energetic, "what the devil am I to do with him?"

And—perhaps it was human nature, paternal nature, in its lowest form, as you may often see it in the police columns of the *Times* newspaper —when I told him that the only thing he had to do was to give his consent to his son's marriage with Dorothy Hall, he appeared first greatly astonished, and then as greatly relieved.

"My consent? Certainly. They're both five-and-twenty—old enough to know their own minds—and have been courting ever so long. She's an excellent young woman; can earn a good income too. Yes, sir. Give them my cordial consent, and, in case it may be useful to them—this."

He fumbled in his pocket, took out an old purse, and counted out into my hand, with an

air of great magnificence, five dirty pound notes. Which was all that I or anybody else ever saw of the money of the Herr von Stein.

When I gave them, with his message, to Dorothy, she crumpled them up in her fingers, with a curious sort of smile, but she never spoke one word.

Uncle Adam has been at many a marriage, showy and quiet, gay and grave, hearty and heartless, but he is ready to declare, solemnly, that he never saw one which touched him so much as that brief ceremony, which took place at the bed-side of William Stone, the trapeze performer. It did not occupy more than ten minutes, for in the bridegroom's sad condition the slightest agitation was to be avoided. My housekeeper and myself were the only witnesses, and the whole proceeding was made as matter-of-fact as possible.

The bride's wedding dress was the shabby old black gown, which she had never taken off for three days and nights, during which she, my housekeeper, and I, had shared incessant watch together; her face was very worn and weary, but her eyes were bright, and her voice steady. She never faltered once till the few words which make a Scotch marriage were ended, and the minister—himself not unmoved—had shaken hands with her and wished her every happiness.

"Is it all done?" said she, half bewildered.

"Ay, lassie," answered my old housekeeper, "ye're married, sure enough."

Dorothy knelt down, put her arms round her William's neck, and laid her head beside him on the pillow, sobbing a little, but softly—even now.

"Oh my dear, my dear! nothing can ever part us more."

The wonderful circus of Herr von Stein has left our town a long time ago. It took its departure, indeed, very soon after the dreadful trapeze accident, which of course got into all the local papers, and was discussed pretty sharply all over the country. Nay, the unfortunate Signor Uberto, alias William Stone, had the honour of being made the subject of a *Times* leader, and there was more than one letter in that paper suggesting a subscription for his benefit. But it came out somehow that his father was a circus proprietor of considerable means, and so the subscription languished, never reaching beyond thirty odd pounds, with which benevolence the public was satisfied.

I believe William Stone was satisfied too;—that is, if he ever heard of it, which is doubtful; for during the earlier weeks and months of his illness his wife took care to keep everything painful from him; and so did I, so long as they remained under my roof. This was a good deal longer than was at first intended, for my housekeeper became so attached to Mrs. Stone, that she could not bear to let them go. And the poor fellow himself was, as Dorothy had promised, "no trouble," almost a pleasure, in the

house, from his patience, sweetness, and intelligence.

When they left me, they went to a small lodging hard by, where the wife set up dressmaking, and soon got as much work as ever she could do, among my patients, and the townspeople generally. For some enthusiastic persons took an interest in her, and called her "a heroine;" though, I confess, I myself always objected to this, and never could see that she had done any more than what was the most right and natural thing for a woman to do, supposing women were as they used to be in my young days, or as I used to think them.

But, heroine or not, Dorothy prospered. And in process of time her love was rewarded even beyond her hopes. Her husband's mysterious affliction gradually amended. He began to use his feet, then his legs, and slowly recovered, in degree, the power of walking. Not that he ever became a robust man; the shock of his fall, acting on an exceedingly delicate and nervous frame, seemed to have affected all the springs of life; but he was no longer quite invalided and helpless, and by-and-by he began anxiously to seek for occupation. I hardly know which was the happiest, himself or Dorothy, when I succeeded in getting him employment as a writer's copying clerk, with as much work as filled up his time, and saved him from feeling, what he could not but feel—though I think he did not feel it very painfully, he loved her so—that his wife was the sole bread-winner.

When I go to see them now, in their cheery little home of two rooms, one devoted to dress-making, the other, half kitchen, half bedroom, in which William sits, and where Dorothy, with her usual habit of making the best of things, has accommodated Scotch ways to her English notions of comfort and tidiness—I say, when I go to see these two, so contented, and devoted to one another, I often think that among many fortunate people, I have seen far less happy couples than William and Dorothy.

A DREADFUL GHOST.

"SUCH a dreadful ghost!—oh, such a dreadful ghost!"

My wife, who was luckily sitting by me, was at first as much frightened as I was, but gradually she succeeded in quieting both herself and me, which indeed she has a wonderful talent for doing.

When she had learnt the cause of my terrified exclamation, we discussed the whole matter:—in which we differed considerably; as on this subject we invariably and affectionately do. She is a perfectly matter-of-fact, unimaginative, and unsuperstitious individual: quite satisfied that in the invisible, as in the visible world, two and two must make four, and cannot by any possibility make five. Only being, with all her gentleness, a little pig-headed, she does not see the one flaw in her otherwise very sensible argument, namely, the taking for granted that we finite creatures, who are so liable to error even in material things, can in things immaterial decide absolutely upon what is two and what is four.

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half your creeds."

And it is just possible that when the devil tempted our forefather to eat of the tree of knowledge, he was laughing, as maybe he often laughs now, to think what a self-conceited fool a man must be, ever to suppose that he *can* know everything.

When I preach this doctrine to my helpmate—who is the humblest and sweetest of women—she replies, in perhaps the safest way a woman can reply to an argument, with a smile; as she did, when, having talked over and viewed on all sides my Dreadful Ghost, she advised me to make it public, for the good of the community, which I consented to do—believing that it really would do good, though in what manner my wife and I differed still. She considered it would prove how very silly it is to believe in ghosts at all. I considered—but my story will explain that.

She and I were invited to a strange house, with which, and with the family, we were only acquainted by hearsay. It was, in fact, one of those "invitations on business,"—such as literary persons like myself continually get; and which give little pleasure, as we are perfectly aware from what motives they spring; and that if we could pack up our reputation in a portmanteau, and our head in a hat-box, it would answer exactly the same purpose, and be equally satisfactory to the inviting parties. However, the present case was an exception; since, though we had never seen our entertainers, we had heard that they were, not a show-loving, lion-hunting household, but really a *family;* affectionately

united among themselves, and devoted to the memory of the lately-lost head. He was a physician, widely esteemed, and also a man of letters, whose death had created a great blank, both in his own circle and in the literary world at large. Now, after a year's interval, his widow and three daughters were beginning to reappear in society; and at the British Association meeting, held at the large town which I need not particularise, had opened the doors of their long-hospitable house to my wife and me.

Being strangers, we thought it best to appear, as I would advise all stranger-guests to do, at the end of the day; when candle-light and fire-light cast a kindly mystery over all things, and the few brief hours of awkwardness and unfamiliarity are followed by the nocturnal separation —when each party has time to think over and talk over the other—meeting next morning with the kindly feeling of those who have passed a night under the same friendly roof.

As my wife and I stepped from our cab, the dull day was already closing into twilight, and the fire only half illumined the room into which we were shown. It was an old-fashioned, rather gloomy apartment—half study, half sitting-room; one end being fitted up as a library, while at the other—pleasant thoughtfulness, which already warmed our hearts towards our unseen hosts!—was spread out that best of all meals for a weary traveller, a tea dinner. So hungry were we, that this welcome, well-supplied, elegant board was the only thing we noticed about the room;—

except one other thing, which hung close above the tea-table, on the panelled wall.

It was a large full-length portrait, very well painted; the sort of portrait of which one says at once, "What a good likeness that must be!" It had individuality, character—the soul of the man as well as his body: and as he sat in his chair, looking directly at you, in a simple, natural attitude, you felt what a beautiful soul this must have been: one that even at sixty years of age—for the portrait seemed thus old—would have shed a brightness over any home, and over any society where the person moved.

"I suppose that must be the poor Doctor," said my wife, as her eyes and mine both met upon the canvas face, which glimmered in the fire-light with a most life-like aspect, the gentle, benevolent eyes seeming to follow one about the room, as the eyes of most well-painted full-face portraits do. "You never saw him, Charles?"

"No; but this is exactly the sort of man he must have been."

And our conviction on the matter was so strong, that when the widow came in, we abstained from asking the question, lest we strangers might touch painfully on a scarcely healed wound.

She was a very sweet-looking little woman: pale, fragile, and rather silent than otherwise. She merely performed the duties of the tea-table, whilst the conversation was carried on with spirit and intelligence by her three daughters,—evidently highly accomplished women. They were

no longer young, or particularly handsome ; but they appeared to have inherited the inexpressible charm of manner which, I had heard, characterised their lost father : and they had, my wife whispered me, a still greater attraction in her eyes—(she had, dear soul, two little daughters of her own growing up)—which was the exceeding deference they paid to their mother, who was not by any means so clever as themselves.

Perhaps I, who had not married a woman for her cleverness, admired the mother most. The Doctor's widow, with her large, soft, sorrowful eyes, where the tears seemed to have dried up, or been frozen up in a glassy quietness, was to me the best evidence of what an excellent man he must have been : how deeply beloved, how eternally mourned.

She never spoke of her husband, nor the daughters of their father. This silence—which some families consider it almost a religious duty to preserve regarding their dead, we, of course, as complete strangers, had no business to break ; and, therefore, it happened we were still in the dark as to the original of that remarkable portrait—which minute by minute took a stronger hold on my imagination ; on my wife's, too—or that quality of universal tender-heartedness, which in her does duty for imagination. I never looked at her, without seeing her watching either our hostess, or that likeness, which she supposed to be the features of the lost husband who to the poor widow had been so deservedly dear.

A most strange picture. It seemed, in its

wonderfully life-like truth, to sit, almost like an unobserved, silent guest, above our cheerful and conversational table. Many times during the evening I started, as if with the sense of a seventh person being in the room—in the very social circle—hearing everything, observing everything, but saying nothing. Nor was I alone in this feeling, for I noticed that my wife, who happened to sit directly opposite to the portrait, fidgeted in her chair, and finally moved her position to one where she could escape from those steady, kindly, ever-pursuing, painted eyes.

Now I ask nobody to believe what I am going to relate: I must distinctly state that I do not believe it myself: but I tell it because it involves an idea and a moral, which the reader can apply if he chooses. All I can say is, that so far as it purports to go—and when you come to the end you will find that out—this is really a true story.

My wife, you must understand, sat exactly before the portrait, till she changed places with me, and went a little way down the oblong table, on the same side. Thus, one of us had a front, and the other a slightly foreshortened view of the picture. Between us and it was the table, in the centre of which stood a lamp—one of those reading-lamps which throw a bright circle of light below them, and leave the upper half of the room in comparative shadow. I thought it was this shadow, or some fanciful flicker of the fire, which caused a peculiarity in the eyes of the portrait. They seemed actually alive—moving

from right to left in their orbits, opening and closing their lids, turning from one to the other of the family circle with a variable expression, as if conscious of all that was done or said.

And yet the family took no notice, but went on in their talk with us: choosing the common topics with which unfamiliar persons try to plumb one another's minds and characters: yet never once reverting to this peculiar phenomenon—which my wife, I saw, had also observed, for she interchanged with me more than one uneasy glance in the pauses of conversation.

The evening was wearing on—it was nearly ten o'clock, when, looking up at the picture, from which for the last half-hour I had steadily averted my gaze, I was startled by a still more marvellous fact concerning it.

Formerly, the eyes alone had appeared alive, now the whole face was so. It grew up, out of the flat canvas as if in bas-relief, or like one of those terribly painful casts after death—except that there was nothing painful or revolting here. As I have said, the face was a beautiful face—a noble face: such an one as, under any circumstances, you would have been attracted by. And being painted, it had the colouring and form of life—no corpse-like rigidity or marble whiteness. The grey hair seemed gradually to rise, lock by lock, out of the level surface; and the figure, clothed in ordinary modern evening dress, to become shapely and natural—statuesque, yet still preserving the tints of a picture. Even the chair which it sat upon—which I now perceived

to be the exact copy of one that stood empty on the other side of the fire, gave a curious reality to the whole.

By-and-by, my wife and I both held our breaths with amazement, nay, horror. For, from an ordinary oil-painting, the likeness had become a life-like figure, or statue, sitting in an alcove, the arch of which was made by the frame of the picture.

And yet the family took no notice, but appeared as if, whether or not they were conscious of the remarkable thing that was happening, it did not disturb them in the least: was nothing at all alarming or peculiar, or out of the tenor of their daily life.

No, not even when, on returning with a book that I had gone to fetch from the shelves at the further end of the room, my poor little wife caught my hand in speechless awe—awe, rather than fear—and pointed to the hitherto empty chair by the fire-side.

It was empty no longer. There, sitting in the self-same attitude as the portrait; identical with it in shape, countenance, and dress—was a figure. That it was a human figure I dare not say, and yet it looked like one. There was nothing ghastly or corpse-like about it, though it was motionless, passionless: endowed, as it were, with that divine calm which Wordsworth ascribes to Protesilaus:—

> "Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
> Brought from a pensive though a happy place."

Yet there was an air tenderly, pathetically human in the folding of the hands on the knees, as a man does when he comes and sits down by his own fireside, with his family round him: and in the eyes that followed, one after the other, each of this family, who now quietly put away their several occupations, and rose.

But none of them showed any terror—not in the slightest degree. The Presence at the hearth was evidently quite familiar to them—awaking no shudder of repulsion, no outburst of renewed grief. The eldest daughter said—in a tone as natural as if she were merely apologising to us heterodox or indifferent strangers for some domestic ceremonial, some peculiar form of family prayer, for instance—

"I am sure our guests will excuse us if we continue, just as if we were alone, our usual evening duties. Which of us is to speak to papa to-night?"

It was himself then: summoned, how or why, or in what form — corporeal or incorporeal— I knew not, and his family gave no explanation. They evidently thought none was needed: that the whole proceeding was as natural as that of a man coming home at evening to his own fireside, and being received by his wife and children with affectionate familiarity.

The widow and the youngest daughter placed themselves one on each side of the figure in the chair. They did not embrace it or touch it; they regarded it with tender reverence, in which was mingled a certain sadness; but that was all.

And then they began to talk to it, in a perfectly composed and matter-of-fact way; as people would talk to a beloved member of a household who had been absent for a day, or longer, from the home circle.

The daughter told how she had been shopping in town; how she had bought a shawl and a bonnet "of the colour that papa used to like;" the books she had brought home from the library, and her opinion of them; the people she had met in the street, and the letters she had received during the day: in short, all the pleasant little chit-chat that a daughter would naturally pour out to an affectionately-interested *living* father; but which now—as addressed to the spectre of the father many months dead—sounded so unnatural, so contemptibly small, such a mixture of the ludicrous and the horrible, that one's common worldly sense, and one's sense of the solemn unseen world, were alike revolted.

No answer came: apparently none was expected. The figure maintained its place, listening apparently; with that gentle smile—reminding one of the ghostly Samuel's rebuke to the Witch of Endor—"Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" or indicating that superior calm with which, after death, we ourselves shall surely view all the trifles which so perplexed us once.

Then the widow took up the tale, with a regretful under-tone of complaint running through it. She told her husband how dull she had been all day; how in the preparations for these

strangers (meaning my wife and me—we shivered as the eyes of the figure moved and rested on us !)—she had found various old letters of his, which vividly revived their happy wedlock days; how yesterday one of his former patients died, and to-day a professorship, which he meant to have tried for, had been given to a gentleman, a favourite pupil ; how his old friends, Mr. A—— and Sir B. C——, had had a quarrel, and everybody said it would never have happened had the Doctor been alive to make peace between them —and so on, and so on. To all of which the figure listened with its immovable silence ; its settled, changeless smile.

My wife and I uttered not a word. We sat apart, spell-bound, fascinated ; neither attempting to interfere, nor question, nor rebuke. The whole proceeding was so entirely beyond the pale of rational cause and effect, that it seemed to throw us into a perfectly abnormal condition, in which we were unable to judge, or investigate, or escape from, the circumstances which surrounded us.

Nothing is known—absolutely nothing—except the very little that Revelation hints at, rather than directly teaches, of the world beyond the grave. But any one of us who has ever seen a fellow-creature die, has watched the exact instant when the awful change takes place which converts the body with a soul to the corpse without a soul, must feel certain—convinced by an intuition which is stronger than all reasoning—that if the life beyond, to which that soul departs,

be anything, or worth anything, it must be a very different life from this; with nobler aspirations, higher duties, purer affections. The common phrase breathed over so many a peaceful dead face, "I would not bring him back again if I could," has a significance, instructive as true; truer than all misty, philosophical speculations, tenderer than all the vagaries of fond spiritualists, with large hearts and no heads worth mentioning. If I had ever doubted this, my doubts would have been removed by the sight which I here depict—of this good, amiable, deeply-beloved husband and father—returning in visible form to his own fireside; no ghastly spectre, but an apparition full of mildness and beauty,—yet communicating a sense of revolting incongruity, utter unsanctity, and ridiculous, degrading contrast between mortal and immortal, spirit in the flesh, and spirit out of the flesh.

That the dead man's family did not feel this, having become so familiar with their nightly necromancy that its ghastliness never struck them, and its ludicrous profanity never jarred upon their intellect or affections,—only made the fact more horrible.

For a time, long or short I cannot tell, my wife and I sat witnessing, like people bound in a nightmare dream, this mockery of mockeries, the attempt at restoring the sweet familiar relations that had once existed, of the living with the living, between the living and the dead. How many days or months it had lasted, or what result was expected from it, we never

inquired; nor did we attempt to join in it; we merely looked on.

"Will papa ever speak?" entreated one of the daughters; but there was no reply. The Figure sat passive in its chair—unable or unwilling to break the silent barrier which divides the two worlds, maintaining still that benign and tender smile, but keeping its mystery unbroken, its problem unsolved.

And now my wife, whose dear little face was, I saw, growing white and convulsed minute by minute, whispered to me:

"Charles, I can bear this no longer. Make some excuse to them—we will not hurt their feelings—only let us go. Don't let them think we are frightened or disgusted; but we must go—I shall go mad else."

And the half-insane look which I have seen in more than one of the pseudo-spiritualists of the present day—people who twenty years ago would have been sent to Bedlam, but now are only set down as "rather peculiar," rose in my wife's eyes—those dear, soft, sensible eyes, which have warmed and calmed my restless heart and unquiet brain for more than fifteen years.

I took advantage of the next pause in the "communications," or whatever the family called them, to suggest that my wife and I were very weary, and anxious to retire to rest.

"Certainly," politely said the eldest daughter. "Papa, Mr. and Mrs. ——," naming our names, "have had a long railway journey, and wish to bid us all good-night."

The Appearance bent upon us—my wife and me—its most benevolent, gentle aspect, apparently acquiescing in our retiring; and slowly rose as if to bid us good-night—like any other courteous host.

Now, in his lifetime, no one had had a warmer, more devoted admiration for this learned and loveable man than I. More than once I had travelled many miles for the merest chance of seeing him, and when he died my regret at never having known him personally, never having even beheld his face, was mingled with the grief which I, in common with all his compatriots, felt at losing him so suddenly, with his fame at its zenith, his labours apparently only half done.

But here, set face to face with this image or phantasm, or whatever it was, of the man whom living I had so honoured—I felt no delight; nay, the cold clearness of his gaze seemed to shoot through me with a chill of horror.

When, going round the circle, I shook hands with the widow and daughters, one after the other, I paused before *that chair;* I attempted to pass it by. Resolutely I looked another way, as if trying to make believe I saw nothing there; but it was in vain.

For the Figure advanced noiselessly, with that air of irresistibly charming, dignified courtesy of the old school, for which, everybody said, the Doctor had been so remarkable. It extended its hand—a hand which a year ago I

would have travelled five hundred miles to grasp. Now, I shrank from it—I loathed it.

In vain. It came nearer. It touched mine with a soft, cold, unearthly touch. I could endure no longer. I shrieked out; and my wife woke me from what was, thank Heaven, only a dream.

* * * *

"Yes, it was indeed a Dreadful Ghost," said that excellent woman, when she had heard my whole story, and we had again composed ourselves as sole occupants of the railway carriage which was conveying us through the dead of night to visit that identical family whom I had been dreaming about—whom, as stated, we had never seen. "Let us be thankful, Charles, that it was a mere fantasy of your over-excited imagination—that the dear old Doctor sleeps peacefully in his quiet grave; and that his affectionate family have never summoned him, soul or body, to sit of nights by their uncanny fire-side, as you so horribly describe. What a blessing that such things cannot be."

"Ay," replied I—"though, as Imlac says in 'Rasselas,' 'that the dead cannot return, I will not undertake to prove;' still, I think it in the highest degree improbable. Their work here is done; they are translated to a higher sphere of being; they may still see us, love us, watch over us; but they belong to us no more. Mary, when I leave you, remember I don't wish ever to be brought back again; to come rapping on tables and knocking about chairs; delivering

ridiculous messages to deluded inquirers, and altogether comporting myself in a manner that proves, great fool as I may have been in the body, I must be a still greater fool out of it."

"And Charles," said the little woman, creeping up to me with tears in her eyes, "if I must lose you—dearly as I love you—I would rather bury you under the daisies and in my heart; bury you, and never see you again till we meet in the world to come, than I would have you revisiting your old fire-side after the fashion of this Dreadful Ghost."

MEADOWSIDE HOUSE.

THIS is not a story, though the title looks as if it were. It is merely a few words meant to be spoken at Christmas time, when people's hearts are open — when their hearths are brightened and their tables filled with little children; for Christmas, so rarely a happy time for us elders, can be made, and always should be, an especial time of delight to children, if only in remembrance of Him who then became a little child. And the more we suffer—we others, to whom year after year has inevitably brought bitter anniversaries—the more we ought to try and spare the children from suffering, as long as we can: by making for our own, in every possible way, a "merry Christmas and a happy New Year;" and also by scattering abroad among others not our own—a little comfort, a little pleasure, a little of that light-hearted mirth, which is all of the present, dreading no future and remembering no past. Ah, let us always try to make the children happy! they will not be children long.

It is with this feeling that I wish to say a few words for a few "puir wee bodies" who live, or rather suffer existence—for in many cases it can hardly be called living—in Meadowside House, Lauriston Lane, lately converted into the Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children.

There is a region, quite unfamiliar to passing strangers and superficial sightseers, and yet within five minutes' walk of the picturesque, historical, melancholy, noisome, abominable Old Town—with its Canongate, Cowgate, Lawnmarket, Grass-market,—classic ground, investigated by flying tourists with mingled curiosity and abhorrence: for seldom does a canker so foul lurk at the heart of any city as of this, the flower of cities—beautiful Edinburgh. Still, for its salvation maybe, close at the back of it lies the other region, known to residents by the name of "the Meadows." How the word suggests to the southern ear pictures of English fields, knee-deep in growing May-grass, reddened with wavy sorrel-seeds and yellowed over with buttercups; or sunshiny meads, where, sitting down and stretching round a circle, arm-wide, you may fill your two hands with cowslips; mingled here and there with those Shaksperian lady-smocks that—

"All silver-white
Do paint the meadows with delight."

Alas! not these Meadows. I have seen a daisy there—bless the gowans! like the poor little children, they grow anywhere—and one or two dandelions, and (I believe, but would not under-

take to affirm the fact) a buttercup: but the principal feature of these meadows is simple grass. Very good grass, though; green and smooth; and one ought to be thankful for it, and for the fresh breeze that blows across it, and for the merry rustle of the two lines of lately planted but well-growing trees. A pleasant place, where the Edinburgh volunteers—honest lads!—come and do rifle-shooting of mornings, usually placing their target directly in the way of early pedestrians; where, later, the genteel nurse-maids from George Square, Buccleuch Place, and the houses round Heriot's Hospital, walk with their young charges, and the ungenteel, youthful fry from Newington and Morningside come out to play, healthy and strong, bare-footed and rough-headed. But the children of a lower class still, abiding in that melancholy region just spoken of, in the tall "lands"—twelve stories high; the dark cellars, windowless, fireless; up the wynds and closes, stiflingly foul, so foul that one often inclines to believe the only cleansing would be a good wholesome fire, like the Great Fire of London,—alack! the children who live here, *they* never come near the Meadows. Their poor, weak, rickety limbs could never totter far enough to reach and roll on the green grass; their eyes, accustomed to dank, damp cellars, where the sun never shines and never shone, could hardly endure the bright, broad daylight, and their poor, thin, unwashed, unclothed bodies would shrink, withered up, from the first sweep of the

healthy breeze that blows across Arthur's Seat and the Braid Hills. They scarcely know that such things exist, unless the angel of sickness—it is an angel, often—carries them away, some strange, miserable, wonderful day, and leaves them, half alive, or with only a few days or weeks of life before them, to lie clean and quiet, away from all noisome sights and smells and sounds, in the peaceful, tidy crib in one of the wards at Meadowside House.

It was a wise and fortunate choice which located the hospital here—its first step since its small beginnings in Lauriston Lane. Let us briefly recount them.

Four years ago* a few worthy Edinburgh doctors—(truly a large portion of the world's worth lies among doctors)—woke up fully to the alarming fact that one half of the children born in Edinburgh die before their third year. Also to a second fact, statistically proved, that this frightful mortality does not lessen the population ; but that the half generation thus cut off is assuredly and immediately replaced by another, more puny, more unhealthy, less fitted both to struggle with the burthen of life themselves, or to transmit it to posterity. Worse far than the sight of a race wholly swept away by pestilence, sword, or famine—or vanishing like snow, as the Indians do, before the hot breath of advancing civilisation—is the spectacle of a race dying out by slow deterioration, and

* This was written in 1864.

from apparently preventable causes, under the very eyes of their brethren. For, however strange and incredible it may appear—as it did when lately the two highest-born in the land, the Prince and Princess of Wales, blest in youth and love and happy fortunes, drove through the High Street and Canongate, smiling gaily and graciously on the two lines of wretched faces that put on a weak, accidental, welcoming smile—still they are our brethren. And it is only the Cains of this world, with fraternal blood on their hands—or the Levites, who, "passing by" the afflicted, are haply Cains too, by omission if not by commission—it is only such as these who dare meet the one Almighty Father with the cry of "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Edinburgh doctors—with other gentlemen out of the profession—felt that they were, in one sense, their brothers' keepers; and being honestly convinced of the two sad facts before named, they set about to remedy them by means of a third great fact—that prevention is better than cure. On the principle that Reformatories are wiser, perhaps cheaper—than Penitentiaries; Servants' Homes than Magdalen Institutions; decent, sanitary labourers' cottages than gaols and workhouses—they thought they would do their best to establish a Children's Hospital.

Few things can be, or need to be, without secondary motives: and even charity itself is in one form an act of self-preservation. It does not detract from the benevolence of this scheme

—that its originators felt also how valuable it would be in furnishing opportunity for the study of children's diseases—so important and difficult a branch of medical science. Also that by taking hold of sickness, especially infectious disorders, at the very beginning, the hospital might be efficacious in stopping the spread of those endemics and epidemics which, rooting themselves amidst the foulness of the beggar's home, spread secret devastation to that of his wealthy and prosperous neighbour. People do not consider—until neglect brings its own retribution—that death has entered many a palace door by the filthy alley left to fester unheeded beneath its shadow; and that many a landlord who will not build, or suffer to be built, decent cottages for his labourers to live in, has to meet his reward in other ways—by poachers, night robbers, dishonest or corrupted servants, contagious diseases, and the still worse contagion of crime. For it is a law of nature to help us in the eternal struggle between good and evil, that we dare not leave the latter alone, turning our lazy or sanctimonious eyes from it, under the supposition that it will never harm us. It will. Even for the safety of his own family, every householder in Edinburgh were wise to lend a hand in the cleansing of that Augean stable which Doctor Guthrie and many others are doing their best for, by sermon, speech, and pen. And one of these means of purification is a Children's Hospital.

The one in Lauriston Lane found many oppo-

nents—some conscientious, some careless or prejudiced; but of all, the less here said the better, seeing the hospital has outlived its time of trial, and attained the grand secret for converting enemies into friends—success.

From the day—8th March, 1860—when it held its first annual meeting, with Dean Ramsay in the chair, and many more honourable and notable Edinburgh gentlemen surrounding him, it has steadily progressed, its directors acting with true Scotch caution, and spending their funds with honest Scotch economy; until lately they were able to purchase, enlarge, and occupy the pleasant old mansion called Meadowside House.

It is in exterior more like a family house than a hospital. Its three stories of cheerful windows imply equally cheerful rooms within, as anybody may prove who calls there between three and five on a week-day afternoon. Its very simplicity, plainness, and *familiness*, so to speak, are a great charm. No money squandered over porticoes and cupolas, bas-reliefs and statues without, and throngs of well-housed, well-salaried servants within: here is just what is wanted and no more. The whole resident staff comprises a medical officer, a matron—who truly appears like the universal mother of this large and helpless little family—a few nurses and domestic servants. Two ordinary wards—one filled always, and a second just opened, in hope that the institution will be enabled to afford it; two fever wards, carefully shut off from the rest of

the house; a few smaller rooms for domestic occupation; and two others, with a separate entrance, devoted to the daily crowd of out-door patients who come for advice and medicine,—this constitutes the whole of the establishment.

It would be very easy to write pages of argumentative appeal or of emotional pleading on that subject which goes to the heart of all women —nay, of all humanity—a sick child. But I shall not do it. I would that, instead of any writing, I could paint a picture—dumb as themselves—of the little white thin faces, lying so patiently on the comfortable pillows. "It is wonderful how good our children are," said the matron. "We never have the least trouble with them, and yet no nurse is allowed either to scold or to punish them." Or, rather, I would that I could tell, to both old and young, as a simple fireside story, with the yule log blazing and the chestnuts crackling on the hearth, the histories, quite true, of some of the poor children who come to, and go, unless in another and often more merciful way they are taken—from Meadowside House.

Hear, for instance, a few anecdotes, chosen at random from the matron's talk, while she went from crib to crib, smoothing one pillow or altering another, administering a word of kindness, or a pat and smile,—small things to rich men's children in pleasant nurseries, sunned through and through with mother's love: but oh, what great and new things to such children as these!

Thomas Weir, admitted here 29th March last;

dismissed, cured, the 21st May; seven years old; very small of his age. The mother had had eight children; all dead but Tommy. The father was in Perth prison—third committal, for wife-beating. Tommy was sent here by the police doctor, his mother being found dead drunk on a stair and the child beside her, ill with fever. For weeks he lay between life and death, neither speaking nor taking notice of anything. His mother would sometimes come to inquire for him, but in such a state that she could not be admitted to the ward. Once she did get in, and Tommy said, "Mither, ye suldna come here when ye've had a dram, the mistress will see ye." One day another wretched-looking woman came, and he told her to go away, and afterwards said to the nurse, "Nurse, she's an awfu' bad one—yon woman. She pawned mither's plaid, and they both got fou, and were taken aff by the police, and I sat my lane on a stair a' the nicht—cauld, cauld!" Tommy afterwards, during his convalescence, told many like tales of his short seven years' life—his numerous wanderings, often walking twenty miles a-day ("that's what gars me look sae auld, ye ken"): how the father and mother once left him and his wee sister at Mid Calder, a village ten miles from Edinburgh, and never came back: how a kind woman gave them a sack to sleep on in a shed, and a "piece" in the morning, and then the two forlorn bairns set off to walk into Edinburgh to their grandfather, who lived in the Grass-market. "He was weel aff ance, and a

grand singer; that's how I can sing sae weel," as poor Tommy often did, to the great delight of the nurses. "Grandfather," it seems, went about the country with a show, of which he played the Merry-Andrew, till, getting aged, he took a room in the Grass-market, and held prayer meetings, Tommy and his mother leading the psalmody. "But," he continued, "in the cauld winter grandfather deed, ye ken, and granny gaed to see a leddy that's kind to her, and whiles mither lifted the things fra grandfather's bed and sold them for whisky. Wae's me! father will be out o' prison soon, and then what'll I do, for him and mither's always fighting." Alas, poor little Tommy Weir!

There was another boy, whose name I forget, found lying on straw in a dark cellar, which had literally nothing in it but this one heap of straw. The parents were in the habit of going out for the day, and locking up the child there, without food, or fire, or clothes. He was brought in—a mere bundle of rags—quite paralysed, and lay for a week on one of the hospital beds, without stirring or speaking, till they almost thought he was deaf and dumb. At last he did mutter out one word, and it was "whisky!" He afterwards tried, in his wretched faint voice, to begin singing a whisky song, and told the nurse he had hardly tasted anything but whisky since he was born. Somehow his wretched mother found him out and came to see him. Immediately after she left, the miserable little creature was caught hiding its wizened face and still half-paralysed hands

under the bed-clothes, trying to undo the cork of a small bottle filled with whisky! But this child also recovered, learned to feed on and enjoy other food than drams, and left the hospital for a future of—God knows what! Still the life had been saved—so far.

And sometimes, when help comes too late, and the life is not saved, it is touching to hear the end of these prematurely old children. One little girl, Jane Mackenzie, used to say often before her death, "I didna think ony folk *could* be sae kind to ither folk's bairns." She took a fancy to one of the gentlemen who often visited the hospital, and asked him to come and talk to her. "I heard ye speaking to yon wee boy, and I thocht, may be, ye wad speak to me too." As he did—many holy and peaceful words; and when the child died, content and happy, he took the trouble of travelling some distance to follow her to her grave.

The little patients who do not die sometimes live for better things than once seemed possible. In January last, one Mary Cullen was brought into the hospital, having suddenly lost the use of her limbs, and a fortnight afterwards her speech. She lay for a long time totally helpless, and apparently imbecile. But eight months of good air, good food, good nursing, have changed the paralysed child into an active girl, a capital little servant in the ward where she came a while ago as a miserable and hopeless invalid. So great is the vitality of youth, when given the least chance of throwing off disease by means of

proper sanitary care, which, in such homes as these children are brought from—nay, in any working and poverty-stricken homes—is purely impossible.

Those who leave their temporary refuge are often very eager to get back to it. "At this time," said the matron, "we have a little fellow who was with us two years since. When he left I said, 'Harry, when will you come and see me?'—'Whenever I'm no weel,' answered he; and sure enough the other day his mother came and said Harry was ill, and would not let her rest till she brought him to the hospital. The next day his sister came in, also very ill. As soon as he saw her he said, 'Dinna greet, Anna; this is a grand place!' and the two soon made themselves quite happy together. There was another boy," continued the matron (from whom I have had all these true stories, as they may be gained readily by any one who visits the place—facts sadder than any fiction), "his name was Pat. He had no father, and worse than no mother. When he recovered he was very unwilling to leave us; but being cured, we could of course keep him no longer, so we gave him some warm clothing—as we generally do, for the rags the children are brought in are almost always obliged to be burnt—and then we sent him away. But for a long time afterwards poor Pat used to come and stand at the kitchen-window, when I was serving the dinners, just to get a few mouthfuls and a warm at the fire. One bitter morning in February he came begging to be

taken in, but I said, 'Pat, you're not ill, and we can't have you.' Next morning he was back again, with his head all cut and bleeding. 'Ye'll tak me in noo,' said he, evidently quite glad of his misfortune. And, though, to his great regret, he got well in a week, still he was so eager to stay that one of our gentlemen kindly admitted him into an industrial school, and poor Pat is all right now."

Sometimes the parents are grateful, and bring little presents to the matron, or make thank-offerings of a few pence to the box at the dispensary, where, chiefly as a matter of form, it is stated that, if the applicants can afford it, the medicines are to be paid for. However, no test is possible, and thus many get gratis the medical aid they could well pay for. Still the good is done, and the charity, as a charity, reaches to the very lowest deeps of that sea of misery close by. Unhappily parents, out of ignorance or carelessness, often delay bringing their children till assistance comes too late; and yet it is hard to refuse the poor little dying creature a few hours of a quiet hospital-bed, on which to breathe its last, instead of sending it back to those pestilential holes where the slightest illness becomes almost certain doom; and death, stripped of all its peace and sacredness, breeds death on every side, by all imaginable horrors of contact with repulsive mortality.

The difficulty, which some energetic adversaries of children's hospitals have upheld so strongly—that of removing a child from home

and parents—has not, in the practical working of this hospital, been found to be a difficulty at all. For, among the classes for which it was chiefly intended, home is no home, and parents, instead of being the child's best guardians in health or sickness, are often, through ignorance or neglect, its very worst. Even the maternal tie—the last to survive amid the wreck of all else that is womanly—is often totally lost; witness the case of little Tommy Weir. Despite all the flimsy objections of sentimental theorists about the sanctity of the parental bond, and the danger of interfering with it, any person of common sense must see, that when parents make of themselves brute beasts, it is not only the right but the duty of national charity to step in, and say, "These are the children of the nation: give up your pretended rights and unfulfilled duties—they are no longer yours, but ours. We may not be able to save you, but these little ones *must* be saved."

A difficult question, and yet it ought to be met and looked rationally in the face, both by governments and by private schemes of benevolence.

If the high arm of righteous authority did a little more than it now does in interfering for the helpless, and breaking the bonds of the oppressed; compelling sanitary observances, laying upon ignorance as well as vice the strong hand of the law, and dragging all corruption out into the open day, it would be all the better—not for us, perhaps, but for those that shall come after us.

And for this end, hoping it will do a little atom of good to leaven this mountainous mass of misery, I tell, just at Christmas time, when the Great Master of us all came to seek and to save that which was lost, the story of the lost lambs who are taken in and folded, either for living or for dying, into this quiet home at Meadowside House. On its arrangements I do not dilate; they are much the same as in all well-conducted hospitals, and almost identical with that of the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street, London, on the principle of which this one was founded. Besides, all who live within reach may go and see the place for themselves; and one hour of such a pathetic sight, either to mothers or children—and especially to childless mothers and motherless children—is worth all that ever I can write about it.

I would like, at this Christmas time, to urge such not only to go and see, but to go and help them;—as lady-visitors, moving from crib to crib, and bestowing a kind word or a plaything or two on the little occupant; as subscribers, giving, perhaps, one small pound a year; as donors, paying a hundred pounds for the not unhappy privilege of knowing that thereby one bed, with one sick child always in it, is secured in perpetuity; as benefactors, who are willing to leave one thousand pounds of the money which they cannot carry away with them—money to which no child is heir, and which, expended on the founding of a ward here, would benefit hundreds and thousands of children to all gene-

rations. Lastly, there is something which everybody can do—every mother of a family who has so many worn-out and disused clothes cumbering her nursery shelves—make them up into a parcel, and send them to Meadowside House to clothe the poor little convalescents, who come there in rags, and would go out, most of them, in utter nakedness, were it not for the charitable store—never too large—which the hospital keeps, and bestows even when its professed charge of the inmates is ended.

Beyond its doors, to follow these poor children is all but impossible. Sometimes, thinking of the homes they come from, and must go back to, one is tempted to believe that the best and safest home for them is that quiet "dead-house," where so many of them are carried, and thence to a quieter spot still. And yet they do live, and He makes them live, and bids us help them to live—He in whose hands alone are living and dying. Therefore we dare not say—since He does not say it—that it were better any one of these little ones should die. We would rather hope that the life, frail as it may be, which the hospital puts into them, is put for a good end, and that the moral influence which they are subjected to under its roof, of cleanliness, order, kindliness, peace, may not be without effect on at least some of them. Small the amount of good done may be, yet have we not the highest authority for believing that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" We can but do our best and trust.

And therefore I have said my humble say, hoping that some will read it who may be able to do far more than I can ever do myself. Nor do I think that even as "a story—a true story," which children are always asking for, it would make the Christmas children less happy, if, gathered round papa's and mamma's knees at the fireside, some one would take the trouble to read to the little people, in whole or in part, what I have written about the forlorn ones so different from themselves—the sick children who are taken in and nursed well, or tended kindly till they quietly die—at Meadowside House, Edinburgh.

IN HER TEENS.

IF "the boy is father of the man," the girl is likewise mother to the woman; and the woman—oh, solemn thought, laden with awful responsibility to each tiny maiden-child that coos and crows at us from her innocent cradle!—the woman is the mother of us all. Far deeper and higher than the advocates of woman's rights are aware of, lies the truth, that women are the heart of the world. From a gynocracy, or even a self-existent, self-protecting, and self-dependent rule, heaven save us, and all other Christian communities! but the fact remains, that on the women of a nation does its virtue, strength, nobility, and even its vitality, rest. Sparta recognised this in a rough barbaric way; Judea, too, when through successive ages every daughter of Abraham was brought up to desire motherhood as her utmost honor, in the hope that of her might be born the long-expected Messiah, the promised Seed. All history, carefully examined, would, we believe, ex-

emplify the same truth—that the rise and fall of nations is mainly dependent on the condition of their women—the mothers, sisters, daughters, wives—who, consciously or unconsciously, mould, and will mould for ever, the natures, habits, and lives of the men to whom they belong. Nay, even in modern times, in looking around upon divers foreign countries—but stay, we will not judge our neighbours, we will only judge ourselves.

If things be so, if the influence of women is so great, so inevitable, either for good or for evil, does it not behove us, who live in a generation where so many strange conflicts are waging on the surface of society, so many new elements stirring and seething underneath it—does it not behove us, I say, to look a little more closely after our "girls?"

It is rather difficult now-a-days to find a "girl" at all. They are, every one of them, "young ladies;" made up of hoop and flounce, hat and feather, plaits of magnificent (bought) hair, and heaps of artificial flowers. There is a painful uniformity, too, in them and their doings—their walking, talking, singing, dancing, seem all after the same pattern, done to order according to the same infallible rule—"What will Mrs. Grundy say?" An original natural "girl," who has grown up after her own fashion, and never heard of Mrs. Grundy, is a creature so rare, that when we find her, at any age from twelve to twenty, we are prone to fall right over head and ears in love with her, carry her off, and marry her im-

mediately. And we hardly wonder that so many of these vapid, commonplace, well-dressed, well-mannered young ladies remain unmarried, or rush into the opposite extreme of frantic independence, and try to create an impossible Utopia, of which the chief characteristic seems to be that of the heaven of Crazy Jane in the ballad—

"With not a man to meet us there."

Which is the most harmful, this foolish aping of men's manners, habits, and costumes, or the frivolous laziness, the worse than inanity, that wastes a whole precious lifetime over the set of its hoops, the fashion of its bonnets, or the gossip of its morning callers? Between the two opposite evils, most welcome is anything, or anybody, who indicates in the smallest degree what a girl really is and ought to be; thus giving us some hope for the women that are to come, the mothers of the next generation.

Thanks, therefore, to "Lucy Fletcher"—whether that name be real or assumed—for a little unpretentious book of verses, entitled "Thoughts from a Girl's Life." Let her speak for herself, in a Preface which, for straightforward simplicity and dignified modesty, is itself almost a poem :—

"These verses are the true expression of the thoughts and feelings of a girl's life, and as such they are given specially to other girls.

"I will not apologise too much for their want of poetical merit; nevertheless it is with a full consciousness of their immaturity that I send them forth. But though the deepening life of years to come may teach a fuller and a higher tone, yet I feel that the thoughts and utterances of to-day may be best fitted to

reach and to help those who stand on the level from which these were written.

"I do not, of course, imply that every word in these verses is true as regards my own life; in poetry less than in any other form of expression, would that be possible; many of the incidents are idealised, and some of the feelings known more by sympathy than by personal experience.

"I send my little book with its own message to those who will care to hear it; I shall be most glad and thankful if it is able in any degree to sympathise with, to help, or to cheer those hearts to whom from my own I speak."

A girl's book—only a girl. Now, ordinarily a youthful poetess is a very unpleasant character. The less a girl writes, the better. That is, publishes: for almost all girls write, and nothing will stop them. Nor is there any actual harm in their mild verses and elaborate love-stories—the temporary outburst of fancy or feeling that will soon settle down into its proper channel, and find a safe outlet in the realities of domestic life. But there is harm in encouraging in the smallest degree that exaggerated sentimentality which wears out emotion in expression, converting all life into a perpetual *pose plastique*, or a romantic drama of which she, the individual, is the would-be heroine. And worse still is that *cacoethes scribendi*, that frantic craving for literary reputation, which lures a girl from her natural duties, her safe shut-up home life, to join the band of writing women—of which the very highest, noblest, and most successful feel, that to them, as women, what has been gained is at best a poor equivalent for what has been lost.

In one sense the kindest wish that a reader can wish to "Lucy Fletcher" is, that this her first book may also be her last; and yet it is a

good book to have written, good and true, and valuable too—as truth always is.

A girl's life. What a mysterious thing that is! None who have reached the stand-point whence they can fairly and dispassionately look back on theirs, but must feel awed at remembering all it was, and all it promised to be—its infinite hopes, its boundless aspirations, its dauntless energies, its seemingly unlimited capacity for both joy and pain. All these things may have calmed down now: the troubled chaos has long settled into a perfect—and yet how imperfect!—world: but the mature woman, of whatever age or fortunes, can hardly look without keenest sympathy and trembling pity on those who have yet to go through it all. For, let poets talk as they will of that charming time in which a girl is

> "Standing with reluctant feet
> Where the brook and river meet—
> Womanhood and childhood sweet,"

the years between twelve and twenty are, to most, a season anything but pleasant; a crisis in which the whole heart and brain are full of tumult, when all life looks strange and bewildering—delicious with exquisite unrealities,—and agonised with griefs equally chimerical and unnatural. Therefore, every influence caught, and every impression given during these years, is a matter of most vital moment. Most girls' characters are stamped for life by the associations they form, and the circumstances by which they are surrounded, during their teens. They

may change and grow—thank heaven all good men and women have never done growing!—but the primary mould is rarely recast; however worn or defaced, it retains the original image and superscription still.

Therefore, however long she may live to modify or expand them, Lucy Fletcher is never likely to think much different from these "Thoughts," which but echo those of hundreds of the "other girls" to whom her preface refers.

"THOUGHTS.

"My thoughts, in silence and alone,
Fronted the mystery unknown,
The meaning of our life;
The curse upon its poverty,
The wealth that brings satiety,
Dull peace, and barren strife.

Base aims achieved, high aims that fail,
Evil that doth o'er good prevail,
Good lost that might have been;
The narrow path we dare to tread,
With all the infinite outspread,
And all that could be, seen.

The unsolved problems that we touch
At every word, not pondered much,
Because they lie so near;
The path unknown that we must tread,
The awful mystery of the dead,
That rounds life's wondrous sphere.

The light behind the veil unseen,
Our only clue what once hath been,—
Dark seems life's mystery;
I cannot know, I dare not guess;
The greater is not in the less,
Nor God's high will in me.

O Thou, the Infinite, Allwise,
Solve Thou for me these mysteries,
Or teach me wiser thought;

I cannot see, but Thou art light ;
I err, but Thou can'st guide aright—
By Thee I would be taught.

Incomprehensible Thy love,
All flights of our weak thought above ;
So too Thy life is high.
Make Thou our life a part of Thine,
Till in its unity divine,
To Thee we live and die.

Content to go where Thou dost choose,
To be what Thou dost need to use,
To follow or be still,
And learn the infinite content
Of one whose yielded heart is bent,
Unto Thy loving will."

This poem, which without striking original merit, is exceeding complete, gives a fair idea of the whole book. There we find a clear, broad, pellucid picture of a girl's life—a loving, simple, thoughtful English girl, with a keen eye for natural beauty, a strong sense of religion, a sound brain, conscience, and heart. All are as yet undeveloped ; and yet there is no immaturity ; the life is complete so far as it goes, and so is the book likewise. It has none of the daring originalities and imperfectnesses from which one can predict actual genius ; no precocity of passion, no remarkable creative power. All is fresh and pure and still as a dewy meadow in the grey dawn of a midsummer morning. Take for instance these two pictures.

"A BUNCH OF HEATHER.

"I gathered purple heather upon the hill-side bare,
The while the bees unsettled buzzed round me in the air,
The finest on the moorlands, all that both hands could hold ;
I bound it with the grasses which grow upon the wold.

That sunny day of summer, the talk and merry speech,
The wonders we discovered, the seat beneath the beech,
Even the wood-birds singing, the light and shade which fell,
All, as I thought forgotten, I now remember well.

For, on this very morning, I found the bunch again,
The flowers are browned and falling, scarce more than stems remain,
I cut the grass that held them, and when unloosed I found,
That all these bygone memories were with the heather bound."

"MAY-TIME.

"It is a pleasant spot, the wind
Is hushed to silence, while behind
The screen of leaves which interlace,
In cool, sweet silence round the place,
Murmurs of far-off brook and bird,
(Scarce noticed, and yet clearly heard,)
Seem fitting voices to express
My spirit's dreamy happiness.

The dusty road is far away;
Forgotten is each weary day;
The sweet leaves shade the distant view
Yet fairer seems the tender blue
That glimmers downward, while to me
Even the future mystery,
Hid by the present, seems more dear,
And I can feel nor doubt, nor fear.

Sometimes God sends this deepest rest;
Sometimes our spirits thus are blest
With perfect passionate content,
Wherein all love with trust is blent.
Sweet time, sweet thoughts, pass not away,
Or, if the sun forget my day,
May I remember how it shone,
And know it shaded, but not gone."

Nothing very wonderful here; nothing "to haunt, to startle, and waylay;" and yet how sweet it is! How completely it gives the portrait of the "girl"—a country girl—no town life could have produced such; with her eyes beaming thoughtfully from under her broad

hat, and her busy, browned hands full of flowers. Not in the least sentimental or self-conscious, and yet in herself a perfect living poem—the best poem a man can read—a tender-hearted, high-thoughted maiden. A little dreamy, perhaps, but with dreams so innocent, pure, and true, that they strengthen rather than weaken her for the realities that are coming. Much she may have to suffer—nay, inevitably will—but we feel that she will suffer nobly, patiently, religiously, even thus :—

"'AS ONE WHOM HIS MOTHER COMFORTETH.'

"I come, dear Lord, like a tired child, to creep
Unto Thy feet, and there awhile to sleep,
Weary, though not with a long busy day,
But with the morning's sunshine and with play,
And with some tears that fell, although the while
They scarce were deep enough to drown a smile.

There is no need of words for mine to tell
My heart to Thee ; Thou needest not to spell,
As others must, my hidden thoughts and fears,
From out my broken words, my sobs, or tears ;
Thou knowest all, knowest far more than I,
The inner meaning of each tear or sigh.

Thou mayest smile, perchance, as mothers smile
On sobbing children, seeing all the while
How soon will pass away the endless grief,
How soon will come the gladness and relief;
But if Thou smilest, yet Thy sympathy
Measures my grief by what it is to me.

And not the less Thy love doth understand,
And not the less, with tender pitying hand,
Thou wipest all my tears, and the sad face
Doth cherish to a smile in Thine embrace,
Until the pain is gone, and Thou dost say,
'Go now, my child, and work for Me to-day.'"

Hardly even dear old George Herbert could have taken a quainter, tenderer fancy, or worked

it out with more delicate completeness. Indeed, one of the best qualities in our young rhymer—she would hardly wish to appropriate prematurely the high name of poet—is the care with which she finishes everything. The chief blots upon her pages are horrible cockney rhymes, such as "born" and "dawn," and—oh, shame! —"bore" and "saw," with a few grammatical and even etymological errors, such as "thrawl" for thrall, which a more watchful press-revision of a girl's first book would easily have avoided. But her rhythm is smooth and musical; her power of expression clear; her style terse and Saxon; she neither overloads with imagery nor cumbers with unnecessary adjectives. Nor is she imitative, as are almost all young writers—the mere reflection of others whom they have read. Whatever her readings may have been—and a young girl can hardly read too much, imbibing other people's wisdom instead of prematurely forcing out her own—Miss Fletcher has fused them all in the alembic of her clear sensible brain, so that her verses come out with no perceptible flavour of Tennyson, the Brownings, or any other favourite idol who has influenced strongly the youthful minds of the age.

Another characteristic—which, among a certain set, will raise the book at once, as a gift-book, to the level of Cowper, Mrs. Hemans, and Martin Farquhar Tupper—there is not one word of love—that is, the passion of love—in it from beginning to end. Not a single outburst of rapture or despair;—not a sonnet or a song

which the most precise of Mrs. Ellises need hesitate at laying before the Daughters of England ;—who will think about such things in spite of Mrs. Ellis. But even with this peculiarity—which we name simply as a peculiarity, neither a merit nor the reverse—this book is true to itself. It comes, as it purports to come, out of a girl's life, the atmosphere of which is still cool and sweet and calm as that grey midsummer morning. Only towards its end do we catch a few arrowy rays struck upward by the unrisen sun—the sun of all human life—of which the Creator of all ordained, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Of Lucy Fletcher's career in the world of letters, we venture no prophecy whatever. Nothing in her book forbids future greatness, and nothing absolutely indicates it. On the whole, her graceful completeness rather implies that appreciative talent which observes more than it creates, and which is just under, not over, the mysterious line which marks the boundary between talent and genius. But of this, time only can decide. Whether she ever writes another book or not, this book is one which it is good for her to have written, and (stranger still) good to have published. For it is a true book —a real book, aiming at nothing higher than it achieves. It can harm and offend none ; it will please and benefit very many. There is nothing morbid in it—nothing forced or factitious. Fantastic melancholy, egotistic introversion, metaphysical or melo-dramatic plumbing of the black

depths of human crime and woe, are altogether foreign to this Lucy Fletcher. Hers is a healthy, happy nature, and her book is a healthy, happy book. As she says herself,—

"SINGING.

"I sing my heart out for the gladness in it,
As less a poet than a happy bird,
Singing, because I must sing, as the linnet,
Unthinking by what ears my song is heard;
While evermore the love which doth begin it,
To fuller gladness by the song is stirred.

The secret of the song, the love which ever,
Within, without, enfoldeth me in rest,
Love sings my song first, and my one endeavour
Is but to learn the notes she chaunteth best;
'Tis not my song I sing, ah! never, never,
But love's, who lulls me gently on her breast.

So sing I, being moved thereto unwitting
Aught but dear love, the sun of my heart's spring,
And seeking only to find words befitting
The music vibrating on every string;
No poet I among earth's crowned ones sitting,
I love and I am loved, and therefore sing."

And long may she go on singing! unless her own contented heart teaches her a better song than all—silence.

CLOTHES.

MY sight not being so good as it was, my granddaughter is in the habit of reading the *Times* aloud to me daily. Possibly, this is not always a labour of love, I being a rather fidgety listener, though I trust not one of those conceited old persons who consider that to minister unto them is to the young a privilege invaluable. There have been times when, perceiving Netty's bright eye wander, and her voice drop into a monotonous absent tone, I have inly sighed over those inevitable infirmities which render each generation in its turn dependent on the succeeding one; times when it would have been easier to me to get up a peevish "There, that will do," and forfeit my own undeniable pleasure, than thus to make a martyr of my little girl. But then, few can have lived to my length of days without being taught the blessedness that lies not only in labours of love, but labours of duty; and I am glad, even at the cost of some personal pain, to see my grandchild learning this lesson;

conquering her natural laziness, accommodating the frivolous tastes of youth to the prosy likings of old age, and acquiring, even in so small a thing as the reading of a newspaper, that habit of self-control and self-abnegation which we women have to practise, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the end of our lives.

So, after going steadily through the leading articles—(by the way, what a curious fact of modern intellectual advance is that page of *Times* leaders, thought out with infinite labour, compiled with surpassing skill, influencing the whole world's destinies one day, to become the next mere waste paper)—after this I said to Netty, "Now, my dear, I leave the choice to you; read anything that you consider amusing."

"Amusing!" As if she doubted whether anything in the *Times* could come under that head. But shortly her countenance cleared. "'An American Bridal Trousseau,'—will that do, Grannie, dear?"

I nodded, and she began to read.

"'Extraordinary Marriage Ceremony. Cuban Don—Young Lady of New York. Will no doubt amuse English Ladies.'

"Why, I declare, it's a list of her clothes! And such a quantity; only hear:—

"'One blue silk, ruffled to the waist; one green and white double skirt, trimmed with black lace; one light blue silk chintz, flowers down the skirt, trimmed with deep fringe to match; one steel-coloured silk, with purple velvet flowers, trimmed with wide bands of purple velvet, edged with black

lace; a surplus waist trimmed to match the skirt; one Swiss dress, the skirt formed with clusters of ruffles and tucks, the waist to match; one white Swiss muslin dress, five flounces, edged with narrow Valenciennes lace; one white Swiss dress skirt, with three flounces, three ruffles on each flounce, pink riband underneath; one Swiss dress tucked to the waist; six dresses of poplin, merino, and Ottoman velvet;'"—

"Stop, stop! let us take breath, child. Poplin, merino, Ottoman velvet; and how many more was it? Swiss muslin, silk chintz, and something with a 'surplus waist,' whatever that may be."

"Indeed, I don't know, Grandmamma," laughed the child; "though you do think me such an extravagant young lady. Not so bad as this one, any how. Just listen:—

"'Eighteen street dresses, of rich, plain, and figured silks, double skirt and two flounces; also moiré antique, made in the newest and most fashionable style; twelve afternoon dresses, consisting of grenadines, organdies and tissue, all varied in styles of making; twelve evening dresses, one pink embossed velvet, trimmed with the richest point de Vénise; one white silk tunic dress, skirt embroidered and trimmed with blonde lace; one pearl-coloured silk, double skirt, with bouquets of embossed velvet; three white crape dresses, ornamented with bunches of raised flowers; three white tulle dresses, with coloured polka spots of floss silk, to be worn over white silk skirts; six dinner dresses, one white silk embroidered with gold; one pink moiré antique, very elegant side stripes; one blue silk, with lace flounces; one amber silk, with black lace tunic dress; one black moiré antique, trimmed with velvet and lace; one white moiré antique, with puffings of illusion, and the sleeves made in Princess Clothilde style; twelve muslin dresses, made with flounces and simple ruffles;'"—

"That's a mercy, girl. I began to think the only 'simple' article the lady possessed was her husband."

"Grandmamma; how funny you are! Well, will you hear to the end?"

"Certainly. One is not often blessed with such valuable and extensive information. Besides, my dear, it may be of use to you when the Prince comes."

(This is the name by which we have always been accustomed to talk openly of Netty's possible, doubtless *she* thinks certain, lover and husband. Consequently, to no ignorant lady's-maid or silly young playfellow, but to her sage old grandmother, has my child confided her ideas and intentions on this important subject, including the imaginary portrait, physical and mental, of "the Prince," what she expects of him, and what she means to be towards him. Also, in no small degree, what they are both to be towards their revered grandmamma. Poor little Netty, she little knows how seldom is any dream fulfilled! Yet, if never any more than a dream, better a pure than a base, a high than a low, a wise than a foolish one.)

"When the Prince comes," said the little maid, drawing herself up with all the dignity of sixteen; "I hope I shall think a great deal more of him than of my wedding, and that he will think more of me than of my wedding clothes."

"Very well, my dear, I trust the same. Now, go on reading."

She did so; and I here cut it out of the newspaper entire, lengthy as the paragraph is, to prove that I have not garbled a line; that I do "nothing extenuate, nor aught set down in malice," with regard to this young American

bride, whose name is not given, and of whom I know nothing whatever :—

"Three riding habits, one black Canton crape, trimmed with velvet buttons; one green merino, English style; one black cloth, trimmed with velvet; three opera cloaks, one white merino, double cape, elegantly embroidered and trimmed with rich tassels; one white cashmere, trimmed with blue and white plaid plush; one grenadine, with riband quilling; twenty-four pairs of varied coloured satin slippers, richly embroidered; twelve pairs of white satin and kid slippers, plain; twelve pairs of white satin and kid slippers, trimmed with riband; six pairs of mouse-embroidered slippers, one pair of kid India mouse, embroidered; one green and grey chenille, embroidered; one purple and black silk, embroidered; two pairs of brown Morocco plain French, all made *à la Turque;* six pairs of slippers, variously embroidered in various colours for the toilet; twelve pairs of silk and satin Français, dress, habit, and walking gaiters; six pairs of walking and winter gaiters, double soles; six street bonnets, made of the most *recherché* Swiss straws, trimmed with handsome riband; one opera bonnet, made of white lace and long fancy marabout feathers; one black and white royal velvet bonnet, trimmed with cluster of pink roses, intermingled with black velvet leaves; six rich head dresses, consisting of chenille, pearl and gold, and other rich materials; six sets of hairpins, of coral, turquoise, pearl, and gold ornaments; six brettel capes of white tulle, trimmed in various styles of fancy velvet chenille and riband; one Bruxelles point appliqué cape, trimmed with puffings of illusion and riband; one dozen of French embroidered handkerchiefs, with initials richly embroidered in the corner; one dozen of real point lace handkerchiefs; one dozen of guipure lace handkerchiefs; one dozen of pine-apple handkerchiefs, embroidered and trimmed with lace; one dozen of fancy illusion sleeves for evening dresses, made flowing *à la favorite;* two dozens of glove tops to match sleeves; one pair of glove tops of point d'Alençon, trimmed with orange blossoms; six sets of fancy wristlets, made of velvet and laces; six French parasols, made of the most magnificent embossed velvet, with rich Chinoise carved handles; also three coquette parasols, simple and elegant; twelve pairs of open-worked and embroidered China silk hose; twenty-four pairs plain silk hose; twelve pairs Balmoral hose; twelve pairs of Paris thread hose, open-worked; twelve pairs of Paris thread hose, plain; twenty-four pairs of rich French embroidered elastics; twelve pairs of China silk under-vests; twelve dozens of French kid gloves of various colours; twelve pairs of gauntlets: buckskin and kid; twelve pairs of travelling gloves, gauntlet tops. The trousseau lace dress was the exact pattern of that used by the Princess Clothilde at the selection of the Empress Eugénie, having been

reproduced in Europe expressly for this occasion. The lace is point plat, point aiguille, Chantilly, and Brussels—in fact, a combination of the most valuable lace known. Among the handkerchiefs were two of point d'Alençon lace, valued at 200 dollars each, and one Valenciennes, worth 250 dollars, the richest ever imported."

Ending, my granddaughter regarded me with a puzzled air—"Well?"

"Well, my dear?"

"Grandmamma, what do you think about it all?"

"I was thinking what a contrast all these gowns are to the one the lady must some day, may any day, put on—plain white, 'frilled,' probably, but still plain enough; since after her first dressing, or rather being dressed, in it, no one will ever care to look at it or her any more."

Netty started—"Grandmamma, you don't mean a *shroud?*"

"Why not, child?—since, with all our fine clothes, we shall all require a shroud some time."

"But it is so dreadful to think of."

"Not when one approaches as near to the time of wearing it as I do. Nor, at any age, is it half so dreadful to think of one's own body, or of any fair body one loves wrapped up in this garment,—as I wrapped your mother up, my Netty, when you were still a baby,—as to think of it decked out like that young creature whose 'trousseau' forms a feature in the public newspapers. She apparently comes to her husband so buried in 'clothes' that he must feel, poor man, as if he had married a walking linen-

draper's shop instead of a flesh and blood woman, with a heart and a brain, a sweet human form, and a responsible immortal soul. Ask yourself, would you wish to be so married, Netty, my dear?"

A toss of the curls, a flash of the indignant young eyes—

"Grannie, I'd rather be married like—like—Patient Griseldis!"

Suggesting that taken out of the region of romance into common practical life, Griseldis' costume might be, to say the least of it, rather chilly—I nevertheless cordially agreed with my little girl. And I half sighed, remembering what was said to me about forty years ago, when I came, with only three gowns, one on and two off, a moderate store of linen, and five golden guineas in my pocket, to the tender arms that would have taken me without a rag in my trunk, or a penny in my purse—ay, and been proud of it too! I did not tell Netty her grandfather's exact words;—but when she questioned, I gave her a full description of the costume in which I walked down the aisle of that village church with young Doctor Waterhouse—my dear husband who was then,—and is now, though his tablet has been in the said church aisle for twenty-two years.

When Netty was gone to her music lesson, I sat thinking. You young folks hardly know how much we old folks enjoy thinking; the mere act of running over mentally times, places, people and things—moralising upon past, present,

and future, and evolving out of this undisturbed quietude of meditation that wisdom which is supposed to be the peculiar quality of age. May I be allowed to take it for granted, therefore, that I am a little wiser than my neighbours, if only because I have more opportunity than they to ponder over what comes into my head during the long solitudes that any age may have, but old age must have? A solitude that ripens thought, smooths down prejudice, disposes to kindness and charity, and, I trust, gradually brings the individual nearer to that wide-eyed calm of vision with which, we believe, we shall all one day behold all things.

I could not get her out of my head—this New York belle, with her innumerable quantity of clothes. For, disguise them as you will into "dresses," "costumes," "toilettes," they all resolve themselves into mere "clothes"—used for the covering and convenience of this perishable machine of bone, muscle, sinew, and flesh—the temporary habitation of that "ego"—the true "me" of us all. One is tempted to inquire, viewing with the mind's eye such a mountain of millinery, what had become of this infinitesimal "me"—the real woman whom the Cuban gentleman married? That is, if it were not crushed altogether out of identity by this fearful superincumbent weight—the weight—vide *Times*—of 16,400 dollars' worth of clothes?

The result of my thoughts is, if an old woman may speak her mind, rather serious: on this as well as the other side of the Atlantic. For, not

to lay the whole burden on our Yankee sister—poor girl, how do I know that she may not be at heart as innocent a child as my Netty?—here is a paragraph I cut out of another paper—headed—"*Dress at Compiègne.*"

"Four toilettes a day are about the general requirement, though there are days when only three are necessary; the invitations are for eight days, and no lady is expected ever to be seen twice wearing the same gown. Count up this, and you will find an average of thirty-two toilets to be carried to the Court. Suppose a female *invitée* to have a daughter or two with her, you come at once to ninety or ninety-six dresses! Now, the average of these gowns will be 250 francs (10*l.*), and you reach for each person the figure of 300*l.* or 320*l.*; if two persons, 640*l.*; if three, 960*l.*"

And all for one week's clothes!!

Far be it from me to undervalue dress. I am neither Quaker, Puritan, nor devotee. I think there is not a straw to choose between the monk of old, whose washing days occurred about twice a lifetime, and the modern "saint," who imagines he glorifies God by means of a ragged shirt and a dirty pocket-handkerchief; they are both equal, and equal fools. Scarcely less so is the "religious" woman who makes it a matter of conscience to hide or neutralise every physical beauty with which Nature has endowed her; as if He, who "so clothes the grass of the field" that even the meanest forms of his handiwork are lovely beyond all our poor imitating, were displeased at our delighting ourselves in that wherein He must delight continually. As if "Nature" and "grace" were two opposite attributes, and there could be any beauty in this world which did not proceed direct from God.

No; beauty is a blessing; and everything that innocently adds thereto is a blessing likewise, otherwise we should never have advanced from fig-leaves and beasts' skins to that harmony of form and colour which we call good "dress," particularly as applied to women. From the peach-cheeked baby, smiling from behind her clouds of cambric, or her swansdown and Cashmere—fair as a rose-bud "with all its sweetest leaves yet folded"—to that picturesque old lady with her silver-grey or rich black silks, her delicate laces and her snowy lawns—there is nothing more charming, more satisfactory to eye and heart, than a well-dressed woman. Or man either. We need not revive the satire of Sartor Resartus, to picture what a ridiculous figure some of our honourable and dignified friends would cut on solemn occasions, such as a Lord Mayor's Show, a University procession, or a royal opening of Parliament, if condemned to strut therein after the fashion of their ancestors, simply and airily attired in a wolf-skin, a blanket, or a little woad and red ochre, and a necklace of beads. We are quite convinced of the immense advantages of clothes.

No; whatever Netty may think when I check her occasional outbursts of linen-drapery splendour, I do not under-value dress; either in theory or practice; nor, to the latest hour of conscious volition, shall she ever see her grandmother looking one whit uglier than old age compels me to look. But every virtue may be exaggerated into a vice; and I often think the ever-

increasing luxury of this century is carrying to a dangerous extreme a woman's right of making herself charming by means of self-adornment.

First, it seems to me that the variety exacted by fashion is a great evil. Formerly, our ancestresses used to dress richly, handsomely; but it was in a solid, useful style of handsomeness. Gowns were not made for a month or a year; they were meant to last half a lifetime, or, perhaps, two lifetimes; for they frequently descended from mother to daughter. The stuffs which composed them were correspondingly substantial; I have a fragment of my grandmother's wedding-dress—stripes of pale satin and white velvet, with painted flowers—which might have gone through every generation from her to Netty without being worn out. This permanence of costume, both as to form and material, besides saving a world of time and trouble, must have given a certain solidity to female tastes very different from the love of flimsy change which is necessarily caused by the ever-shifting fashions and showy cheapnesses of our day. I may have an old woman's prejudice in favour of the grave rather than the gay; but Netty never takes me with her to choose her "summer dresses," that amidst all the glittering display I do not heave a sigh for the rich dark satins of my youth, that "stood alone" as dressmakers say—fell into folds, like a picture; and from month to month, and year to year, were never taken out of the drawer without seeming to dart from every inch of their

glossy surface the faithful smile of an old friend —"Here I am, just as good as ever; you *can't* wear me out."

Looking the other day at the exquisite architecture, without as within, of Westminster Abbey, and thinking what infinite pains must have been bestowed upon even every square yard, I could not but contrast that century-grown grand old building, in which each builder, founder, or workman was content to execute his small fragment, add it to the slowly-advancing magnificent whole, and, unnoted, perish;—I could not, I say, help contrasting this with the Sydenham glass palace, the wonder of our modern day; but fifty years hence, where will it be? No less the difference between those queenly costumes made permanent on canvas or in illuminated missals—rich, sweeping, majestic; conveying, not the impression of a gown with a woman inside it, or a woman used as a peg whereon to hang a variety of gowns, but a woman whose gown becomes a portion of herself—a half invisible yet important adjunct of her own grace, sweetness, or dignity, though it would never strike one to criticise it as fashionable or unfashionable: certainly never to ask the address of her mantua-maker.

And this, it appears to me, is the limit at which expensive dress becomes, in every rank and degree, first a folly and then a sin—namely, when the woman is absorbed in, and secondary to, the clothes. When the planning of them, the deciding about them, and the varying them,

occupy so much of her time or attention that dress assumes an importance *per se*, and she consequently, in all circumstances and societies, is taught to think less of what she is than of how she is attired. This, without distinction of station or wealth;—for the maid-servant, sitting up of nights to put a flounce to her barège gown, or stick artificial flowers under her tiny bonnet, is just as culpable as the Empress Eugénie, wearing and exacting of her guests, four new *toilettes* per diem. And equally does one grieve to contemplate the American belle, taking out of her youthful love-dreamings, or her solemn meditations on the state which, as *Juliet* says,

"Well thou knowest, is full of cross and sin"—

the time required merely to choose and order those fourscore dresses, which, granted that she is rich enough to afford them, she can never possibly wear out before fashion changes. Lucky will be her lady's-maid, or maids, for she must require as many "dressers" as a royal personage; and lucky the New York buyers of cast-off garments for years to come.

Then—the packing! Even should the "Cuban don" travel in the style of a hidalgo, he cannot fail to be occasionally encumbered by the multiplicity of boxes which accompany his fair lady. And arrived at home—if he may hope for such a word—will it not take an entire suite of rooms in which to stow away that fearful amount of finery? "My love," we can imagine the poor

gentleman saying, when fairly distracted by the goodly array, "get rid of it anywhere you like; I don't care; I married *you*, and not your clothes."

A sentiment not uncommon to the male species. If women who are supposed to dress to please this sex did but know how much valuable exertion in that line is entirely thrown away upon them—how little they care for "white tulle with coloured polka spots"—"moiré antique with puffings of illusion,"—a poor illusion, indeed,—and how indifferent they are to the respective merits of "*point plat*," "*point aiguille*," Brussels and Valenciennes! Even in his most rapturous moment of admiration, a man is sure to say, generalising, "How lovely you look!" never, "What a sweet pretty dress you have on!"—The *tout ensemble* is all he notices. Most likely, he will approve more of your neat gingham or snowy muslin—or perhaps your rich dark silk with a bright ribbon that catches his eye and pleases his sense of colour, than he will for your *toilette* most "*soignée*," with all its extravagance of trimmings and ornaments. Especially if he sees upon you that ornament which all the milliners cannot sell, nor all the beauties buy—"a meek and quiet spirit," which is, in the sight not only of God but man, "of great price."

"My poor New York bride," moralised I; "I wonder if, among your innumerable ornaments, you have ever dreamed of counting *that!*"

Viewed in this mood, the clothes question

becomes a serious thing. It is not merely whether or no a lady is justified in spending so much money upon dress alone—or even the corresponding point, whether or no such ultra expense on costume be good for trade. It becomes less a social and political than a moral question. Even though this extravagant personal luxury be temporarily beneficial to commerce, to countenance it is most assuredly doing evil that good may come; injuring fatally the aggregate morals of a country, and lowering its standard of ideal right—the first step in its decadence and ultimate degradation. For what sort of men and women are likely to grow up from the children of a generation which has its pocket-handkerchiefs of "point d'Alençon, valued at 200 dollars each, and Valenciennes, worth 250 dollars—the richest ever imported?" O, my sisters over the water, these were not the sort of brides who became Cornelias, Volumnias, and mothers of the Gracchi!

Perhaps there was some foundation in the cry set up and laughed down, a while ago, that the terrible commercial crisis of 1857 was caused by the extravagance of women's dress, especially American women. Even with us here, many prudent, practical young fellows, not too deeply smitten to feel "all for love, and the world well lost," yet secretly craving for home, and its comforts and respectabilities, and acute enough to see that a bachelor is never worth half so much, either to himself, society, or the State, as a man who is married and settled, may yet

often be deterred from that salutary duty by—what? A vague dread of their wives' clothes.

Not quite without reason. No wonder that when he comes home from the blaze of an evening party to his Temple chambers or the snug solitudes of his Fellow's den, the worthy gentleman shivers inwardly at the idea of converting himself into a modern Orestes, haunted by winged Eumenides of milliners' bills—of having a large proportion of his hard-earned family income frittered away in "loves of laces," "exquisite ribbons," and all the fantasies of female dress which a man's more solid taste generally sets down at once as "rubbish." In which, not seldom, he is quite correct.

Women's modern propensities in this line might advantageously be restrained. It is frequently not the dress which costs so much as its extras; which rarely add to the effect, but often quite destroy that classic breadth and unity which, to my old-fashioned eyes, is one of the greatest charms in any costume. It is astonishing how much may be saved in the course of a year by this simple rule, Never buy trimmings.

I have one more word to say, and then I have done.

A woman should always remember that her clothes should be in expense and quantity proportioned to her own circumstances, and not those of her neighbour. The mingling of classes is good—that is, the frequent association of those persons who in effect form one and the same class, being alike in tastes, sympathies,

moral purpose, and mental calibre—however various be their degrees of annual income, worldly station, profession, trade, or unemployed leisure. Provided always that the one meeting-point, which likewise can alone be the fair point of rivalry, lies in themselves and not their externals. How can I, who but have 200*l.* a-year, dress like my friend Mrs. Jones, who has 2,000*l.*? —but is that any reason why I, who am, I hope, as true a gentlewoman as she is, should eschew her very pleasant society, or, out of mere cowardice, ruin myself by mimicking her in the matter of clothes?—Nothing is so fatal as the ever increasing habit that I notice, of each class dressing, or attempting to dress, in a style equal to the class above it—the maid imitating her mistress, the young shop-girl the woman of fortune, and so on. Even mothers of families one sees continually falling into this error, and wearing gowns, shawls, &c., that must of necessity have pinched the family income for many a day. My dear ladies, will you not see that a good daily joint of meat on your table is far more conducive to the health and happiness of those sitting round it, than the handsomest silk gown placed at the head of it? that a good, well-paid domestic servant (and you cannot expect a good one unless well paid) is of more worth to you and yours, in absolute comfort, than the very grandest of milliners or dressmakers?

I have lived long, my dears, and worn out a considerable quantity of linen-drapery in my time; but I can fearlessly assert that, at every

age, as a young girl at home, a matron in her own house, and an old lady free to spend her income in her own way—the one economy which I have always found safest to practise, as being least harmful to oneself, and least annoying to other people, was—"clothes." And I shall try, if possible, to teach it to my granddaughter. Not that mean economy which hides poor materials by a tawdry "making-up"—disguising cheap silks, coarse linen, and flimsy muslin by a quantity of false lace, sham jewellery, dirty ribbons, and *un*-natural flowers,—but that quiet independence with which, believing that the woman herself is superior to anything she wears, we just wear fearlessly what suits our taste and our pocket; paying a due regard to colours, fashions, freshness, and cleanliness; but never vexing ourselves about immaterial items, and as happy in a dress of last year's fashion as if we had at command the whole establishment of the renowned Jane Clarke, who, they say,—but for the credit of womanhood I hope it is untrue,—ordered herself to be buried in a point lace shroud.

Ay, as I reminded my little Netty—we must all come to this last garment. To an old woman—who never will put off her black gown except for that white one—the matter of clothes seems often a very trivial thing, hardly worth, indeed, the prosy dissertation I have been led to give upon it. Let us only so clothe ourselves, that this frail body of ours, while it does last, may not be unpleasing in the sight of those who love

us; and let us so use it in this life that in the life to come it may be found worthy to be "clothed upon" with its Maker's own glorious immortality.

THE

HISTORY OF A HOSPITAL.*

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of all these little ones, ye have done it unto Me."

THOUGH this article is headed with a text, it is by no means meant as a sermon, least of all a charity sermon; being simply a record and statement of facts, which, in their sharp unvarnished outline, preach their own homily. It is intended to give, without any embellishment of fancy or glamour of sentimental emotion, the history of a hospital, of sufficiently recent date to make that chronicle possible, credible, and capable of proof, by any who will take the trouble of investigation.

Previously, however, let a word be said about hospitals in general. Many persons are in the habit of viewing them solely as charities, which is a great mistake. Charitable purposes they undoubtedly fulfil to the individual, but they are of equal importance to the community at large.

* This paper—like "Meadowside House"—was written years ago, and by no means indicates the present improved and extended condition of the Hospital.

Would that every wealthy sufferer, lying in as much ease as can be given him on his restless bed, knew how much he owes of relief—possibly even life—to the skill and experience learned at those forlorn hospital beds, where all the mysterious laws of disease are carefully studied, worked out into theories, and tested by incessant observation of cause and result, on a scale much wider, more complete and satisfactory, than any private practice could ever supply! Would that all of us, who at some time or other, either for ourselves or those dearer than ourselves, have known what it was to live upon every look of "the doctor"—to recognise him as the one human being who is all-important to us, on whose talent, decision, caution, tenderness, hangs everything most precious to us in this world—would that all could understand how much of that which makes him what he is, has been gained within those long dreary ranges of many-windowed walls, dedicated to physical suffering, and consecrated by its hopeful and merciful alleviation!

The hospital now to be written of has remarkably few of the painful characteristics of its class, as will be shortly shown. First, we have to do with its history, beginning from the very beginning.

On the 30th of January, 1850, nine gentlemen, two of whom were of the medical profession, met to consider whether it was not possible to establish in London a Hospital for Sick Children. They believed that, besides the great benefit of such an institution to a class

which could with difficulty find admission to ordinary hospitals, it would supply a desideratum long wanted in London, though well provided for in foreign cities—namely, an opportunity for studying infantile diseases. These—every mother and nurse knows, or ought to know—are so sudden, so fluctuating and mysterious in their nature, so difficult of diagnosis and treatment, and often so fearfully rapid in their fatality, that they furnish a distinct branch of medical science, the importance of which can hardly be sufficiently recognised. For people forget that on the health of the growing-up generation hangs that of generations more ; also that it is not merely the alternative between life and death, but between wholesome, happy, enjoyable life, and the innumerable forms of death in life, which an unhealthy or neglected childhood entails upon the innocent sufferers to the end of their days.

These nine gentlemen, deeply conscious of this fact, and anxiously desirous to remedy it, prepared an appeal, which, appendixed by letters from various eminent physicians, should, it was agreed, be disseminated as widely as possible. Afterwards, to satisfy inquiries and answer objections, a second meeting was held, and a second appeal prepared. This, signed by several well-known members of the medical profession, was forwarded to all their brethren in town or country.

For a whole year they laboured silently ; laying carefully the foundation-work of their

plan by observation and inquiry in all directions, at home and abroad—one of their number spending some time in investigating similar hospitals in foreign cities. At length the result of all this came to light in a public meeting, which was held on March 19, 1851; Lord Shaftesbury—then Lord Ashley—being chairman.

Within a fortnight afterwards the committee found and took a large old-fashioned house in Great Ormond Street—once the residence of the notable Dr. Meade. But "festina lente" was still their wise maxim; and it was eleven months more before the Hospital for Sick Children was definitely opened, to admit—one little girl!

> "She was the first that ever burst
> Upon that unknown sea,"—

across which so many frail little vessels were afterwards to be safely piloted. Poor little girl! Her name and what became of her, history chronicleth not. Imagination might paint the forlorn wee face in its neat bed, sole occupant of the magnificent room which beauties swam through, and gallants danced through, in the old days when Bloomsbury was the fashionable part of London. But, as we said, we do not mean to deal either with the poetical or the picturesque.

After this, many influential people took up the children's cause. Charles Dickens—brilliant as large-hearted—advocated it by tongue and pen; the Bishop of London and Lord Carlisle said many a good word for it. Little money

was gained thereby, but much sympathy and kind encouragement; also the best impetus that can be given to a really good cause, aware of its own value,—publicity. By-and-by the first annual report appeared, announcing as patroness of the Children's Hospital the highest mother in the realm, and then definitely stating its objects. These were: "1. The medical and surgical treatment of poor children. 2. The attainment and diffusion of knowledge regarding the diseases of children. 3. The training of nurses for children."

It is a notable report, inasmuch as it so frankly states the imperfections and difficulties of the scheme.

"At first it seemed as if a Children's Hospital were not needed; for so few were the applicants, that during the first month only twenty-four were brought as out-patients, and only eight received as in-patients. The hospital had its character to make among the poor. Before long, greater numbers of children were brought as out-patients, but their mothers often refused to let them be taken into the hospital; and only by degrees learned to place full confidence in its management, and to believe that those who asked for their suffering little ones were indeed to be trusted with so precious a deposit."

This answers an objection that has been urged against children's hospitals, infant schools, public nurseries, and the like; namely, that the mother is the only and best guardian of the child, in sickness and in health. Undoubtedly, when such care is possible. But a sick child in a rich man's well-ordered comfortable nursery, or even in an ordinary middle-class house, is in very different circumstances from a sick child in a poor man's one room—inhabited by other children and adults

—full of noise, confusion, and dirt, with perhaps a drunken father, or a mother so worn with want, and passive with misery, that "if it please God to take it, poor lamb!" seems rather a desirable possibility than not. There can be no question that the quiet clean ward of a hospital, with a good skilled nurse, instead of a broken-down, ignorant, or careless mother, is a good exchange —under the circumstances; and in that, as in many other conjunctures of human life, we have to judge, not by possibilities, but actual circumstances—to choose, alas! not an unattainable good, but the least of two evils.

Year by year the history of the hospital progresses. Out-patients increase enormously: in-patients are still limited by the want of sufficient funds. Nevertheless, as the list of subscribers swells, and one or two legacies fall in, the number of tiny beds is added to by twos and threes. We notice another prudent peculiarity, only too rare, viz. that the official staff is kept down to the lowest limit conducive to the proper working of the charity. Reading over the items of expenditure in the yearly reports, it is plain to see that not a shilling has been spent unnecessarily.

The cause becomes gradually more known. Among the list of donors we begin to find more than one touching line, such as "A Thanksgiving," "Thank-offering for the recovery of sick children"; rich parents who have secretly poured out their full hearts in that best of gratitude to the heavenly Father—the helping of His suffering poor, whom we "have always with us." And

even the poor themselves go not away thankless; for we find in the report for 1856 that a "Samaritan Fund" is started, to provide destitute children with clothing on quitting the hospital, and that this fund has been—

"almost entirely supported by the spontaneous bounty of the friends of the out-patients. Boxes have been placed in the out-patients' waiting-room, and the poor frequenting it have shown their sense of the value of the hospital by their unsolicited contributions. Since the formation of the fund in May, the average weekly receipts have exceeded seventeen shillings—a large sum, when we call to mind the great distress that the present cost of provisions has inflicted upon the poorer classes."

Slowly and steadily affairs brighten. At one time, when the capital of the charity was reduced to 1,000*l.*, a festival, at which Mr. Charles Dickens made one of his beautiful and touching speeches, produced the sum of 2,850*l.*, out of which 500*l.* came from an "anonymous benefactress."

Still the committee maintain their prudent carefulness. They—

"beg to assure subscribers that they have no desire, even if they had the means, to erect a splendid edifice enriched with architectural adornments; for the present site would furnish, at no great expense, all that they desire for the full realisation of their plan of forming a hospital with one hundred beds for sick children."

And in the following year they see their way towards purchasing the adjoining house and garden, making a communication between. This enables them to establish a convalescent room, so that those recovering may no longer disturb the patients really sick; and a separate room for the nurses, where they can take their meals, and enjoy a little of that indispensable pause in their

labours, without which the strongest and tenderest woman becomes worn-out at last.

More space, also, allows the committee to carry out their third intent—the training of young women as sick nurses; to whom they offer a home within the hospital, at a charge of six shillings per week for board and lodging. And the ground floor of the new house is converted into an infant nursery, after the pattern of the Paris "*crêches*," where the poor working mother, who is obliged to leave her child during the day, may leave it in safety and comfort, sure that it will be well fed, warmed, and tended, for the small payment of from twopence to fourpence a day, according to age and diet. This also is to be a training school for young girls as nursery-maids; the committee feeling that

"to show how children should be treated in order to keep them in good health, is hardly alien to the main purpose of the institution—the restoring of them when sick."

The year 1860 records a further step in the usefulness of the hospital—the delivery, by its physician and surgeon, of gratis lectures on the diseases of children. These were attended by more than a hundred of the medical profession, and have been repeated since. And now comes the ninth and latest annual report. By it we find that the idea originated by that handful of kind-hearted gentlemen has developed itself into an established charity: not wealthy, indeed, but able to keep its head afloat among the innumerable other charities of the metropolis. Its example has been followed: similar hospitals for

sick children have been started in the provinces, and in the city of Edinburgh especially. Meantime, the parent institution is able to provide fifty-two beds, which are only too constantly filled, for in-patients, and medical care for 10,000 out-patients yearly. Out of its Samaritan Fund of £91 18*s.* 1*d.*, it has clothed within the year 127 children, besides sending others to Brighton, and to Mitcham, in Surrey, where homes are provided for the poor little convalescents, who otherwise must vanish into noisome streets and crowded alleys, where their frail spark of renewed health would soon be totally extinguished. On the whole, the committee feel and acknowledge that they are a successful institution.

Now success is a curious thing. Unsuccessful people do not believe in it; they attribute it to "chance," or "luck," or "circumstances." Yet, since "there can be no effects without a cause," surely if a man, or an undertaking, fails repeatedly and hopelessly, may it not be just possible that there is some hidden cause for the same? Probably, a fault—possibly, only a misfortune; but still some tangible reason which accounts for failure. And, on the other hand, if a man or his doings are successful, is it not common sense, as well as common charity, to admit that he may deserve to succeed? There is no injustice, but inevitable necessity, in the Parable of the Talents. The solemn sentence, "From him that hath little shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have," is paralleled by the equally solemn truth, "Unto whom much is given, of

him much shall be required." This hospital, which had lived through so much difficulty into a time of comparative success, seemed worth going a good way to see—and I did so. I dislike passing out of the impersonal third person into the intrusive and egotistical "I;" but it is the simplest way of stating what I saw, and what any lady can see for herself, if she chooses, at 49, Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury. I went there on a certain dull December day, a day that will never be forgotten by the present generation; when all business was suspended, all shops closed, and churches opened; when everybody looked sad, and spoke with bated breath, often with gushes of tears, of the Royal widow whose two young sons were that day standing over their dear and noble father's open grave. But this is a subject impossible to write about. From the highest to the lowest, all England felt the grief which darkened last Christmas-tide as if it had been a personal family sorrow. The bells had ceased tolling, and in the heavy grey afternoon, people stood about in groups along the shut-up streets in a Sunday-like quietness, talking mostly of the honoured dead who had by this hour been buried out of sight, and of "the poor Queen," and "the children," as if she had been everybody's sister, and the children everybody's children. It seemed a fitting day upon which to visit a house of sorrow, as a hospital must, more or less, always be.

Only a small proportion of the well-to-do and

fortunate portion of society is likely ever to have seen the interior of a hospital: once seen, it is a sight burnt into memory for life. But the room which we entered, or rather the suite of rooms—which had been the drawing-rooms of those vanished nobilities who had once inhabited Great Ormond Street—was very unlike the ward of an ordinary hospital. It was rather like a spacious night-nursery, with neat little beds scattered about; warm, cheery fires, with a couch on each side the fireplace; and a few children lying or squatting about, or sitting up in their pallets, quietly playing with toys, reading books, doing bead-work. Some, too ill for either work or play, were stretched mournfully, yet peacefully, on their pillows—solitary, it is true, but without giving any impression of dreariness or forlornness. The rooms were airy, light, and warm; there was nothing whatever of the hospital feeling and hospital atmosphere.

Yet suffering is suffering—always painful to witness. I cannot even now recall the impression given by those rows of tiny beds—neat and clean, nay, pretty, as they were—each tenanted by a poor little face and form, wasted, often distorted, always unchildlike, and marked by every gradation of diseasedness rather than mere sickness, for there is a difference;—I cannot, I say, call to mind this picture, without the ever-recurring question, Why should such things be? But it is not our business to puzzle ourselves over the great mystery of evil, and why it exists at all; but to lessen it as much as lies in our

power—which, by an equal mystery, it is continually put into our hearts, and wills, and capabilities to do. Who could doubt this when looking on those piteous wrecks of childhood, from which every trace of the beauty, charm, and sweetness of childhood was gone, yet the nurses were taking such motherly care of them; speaking so kindly, and soothing so patiently, though the latter was hardly required?

"How exceedingly good they all seem," we noticed—as, indeed, no one could help noticing, who was at all acquainted with the difficulty of managing sick children, their extreme restlessness, fretfulness, and general "naughtiness"—poor little lambs! who have not yet learned the hard lesson of maturity, endurance without end.

"It's curious, ma'am," replied the nurse, "but they almost always are good. The amount of pain some of 'em will bear is quite wonderful. And they lie so patient-like; we hardly ever have any crossness or whimpering. Maybe, it is partly because, considering the homes they come from, they find themselves so quiet and comfortable here. But, unless they're very bad, they scarcely ever cry. Poor little dears!"

There were tears in the woman's own eyes—God bless her! She, like one or two more of the establishment, had been there from its commencement. She was evidently a great favourite, and a most important person. Her little patients, we heard, when discharged cured, continually came back to see "Nurse," and the hospital; looking upon it as a pleasant, happy home,

instead of a place to be shuddered at and avoided.

Another peculiarity I noticed as much as the patience of the children—that the nurses seemed to have their hearts in their work. Without a single exception, every official I saw connected with the place seemed to take a personal interest in it, and to work for love as well as necessity. No doubt this arises from the strong influence exerted by the heads of the hospital over all its employées, and from the care taken that all these employées should be women of character, and capability fitted for their duties. It seemed here exactly as it is in a household, where you can usually judge not only the servants by the masters, but the masters by their servants.

The little patients were all under twelve years of age, that being the limit allowed, though no doubt it is frequently transgressed by parents eager to get their children in. Without fear of discovery, too; for the small stunted creatures looked, nearly all of them, much below that age. Few were labouring under acute illness; the complaints seemed mostly chronic, the result of "poverty, hunger, and dirt," or of constitutional congenital malady, manifesting itself in the innumerable forms of bone and joint disease, ulcerations and abscesses, brain and lung disorders, and all the long train of ills for which apparently there is no remedy but death.

This fact struck me in appalling confirmation of a state of things which physiologists have

lately begun to think of sufficient moment to be written of in books, considered in social meetings, and even adverted to in *Times'* leaders—the weak state of health into which, in this age, all classes seem to be sinking. In the lowest class this condition of body is often combined with disease so radically and hopelessly confirmed, that its perpetuation becomes frightful to contemplate. Looking from bed to bed of these miserable little abortions of childhood, one was tempted to believe that it might be a merciful Providence which would sweep away of a sudden half the present generation, if by that, or any means, healthy fathers and mothers might be given to the next.

But this is a subject which involves so much, that I had better leave it alone, for wiser handling. One remedy, however, lies in the power of every man, still more of every woman—to alleviate this melancholy condition of things, by acquiring and spreading, so far as each one's influence extends, sanitary knowledge, and sanitary practice. Here, beyond its medical limits, the Children's Hospital necessarily works. It is impossible but that each patient, and each parent or friend that comes to visit the patient, should carry away, consciously or not, an idea or two on the subject of cleanliness, ventilation, tidiness, and *comfort*—that indescribable something which the working-classes so seldom strive for, not merely because they have not the money to get it—money does not necessarily bring it—but because they literally do not know what it

is. It will probably take another century to make poor people understand what in the last century even rich people were atrociously ignorant of—that a breath of fresh air is not immediately fatal; that skins were made to be washed every day: that dust and dirt and foulness of all kinds carry with them as much deadly malaria as if you took so many grains of arsenic and administered the same to your household every morning.

But I am becoming discursive. Let us proceed to the boys' ward, which is on the second floor, above the girls', and precisely similar in size and arrangement. Here, too, are the same characteristics — long-standing diseases rather than accidental sicknesses; the same patient look on the wasted faces; the same atmosphere of exceeding but not dreary quietness. One boy, whose restless eyes seemed to follow us more than the rest, I stopped and spoke to, asking if he were comfortable?

"Oh, yes, quite; but I am strange here. I only came in on Saturday."

And there was a choke in the voice, but he gulped it down, and put on a ghost of a smile, and acquiesced in the wish that he might soon get well and come out again, with a pathetic courage which doubled the hope that he would do so.

There were many convalescents, the nurse said, but they were scattered about the wards, and not in their proper room, which was being adorned with evergreens and paper roses for a

grand Christmas entertainment, to which every little patient, whom it was at all safe to move, was to be brought down on a sofa, to share as much as possible in the general enjoyment.

"We don't leave any out if we can help it—it's only a little bit more trouble, and they like it so. We take them away again before they get overtired. We think it rather does them good, to get a little bit of pleasure."

As doubtless it does to the hardworked nurses, who seemed preparing for the festival with a hearty good-will, and a surprising taste and ingenuity. They quite regretted, and we too, that we saw the preparations incomplete, and could not regale ourselves with the *tout ensemble*. It was a little bit of brightness, pleasant to contrast with the constant anxiety, labour, and suffering, which must necessarily be the normal condition of a hospital.

From the convalescents' room, which is in the second house, we passed to the public nursery, to which other rooms there are devoted, pending the time when the finances of the institution will allow of converting the whole into sick wards. There, penned in something like a sheep-fold, half-a-dozen infants were crawling, and a dozen more sat in tiny arm-chairs, ranged in a fixed circle, at the centre of which was a young nurse amusing them to the best of her power. A mysterious arrangement, something between a swing and a tweedle, occupied the one side of the room; on the other, several bigger children were having what appeared a very satisfactory

game of play. In an inner apartment, a row of bassinetts, some empty, some occupied, indicated possibilities of sleep, doubtless attainable, even in that noisy room. But noise was a blessing. There was health here. Most of the children looked uncommonly fat and flourishing, and one of them, who had recognised and stretched its arms to one of the nurses, to be taken up, on being declined, set up a most unmitigated and wholly satisfactory howl, that was quite refreshing.

The fever ward, isolated at the house-top, we did not visit; but the matron took us down to the basement story, and explained all its appliances. Her numberless presses, arranged with a method, exactitude, and perfect neatness that was quite a treat to behold, and would warm the heart of all tidy housekeepers and orderly mistresses,—her culinary arrangements and statistics,—were all politely revealed. Above all, her "Samaritan" cupboard, where we saw shelf after shelf filled with children's clothes, systematically arranged, so that they could be got at at a minute's notice. And, beside it, still unpacked, was a large parcel which had just come in from a Lady Somebody, containing cast-off clothing from the little great people which would be invaluable to the little poor ones.

"We shall get several more such bundles," said the matron, cheerily; "we always do at Christmas-time, and I hope there will be inside of them plenty of little flannel petticoats, and flannel night-gowns, for we want these things

worse than all. Sometimes the poor little creatures are brought to us with scarcely a rag upon their backs; I wish charitable ladies only knew how much we want cast-off clothes—we can hardly get too many."

Certainly not; and it is such an easy thing to give that which costs nothing but a moment's kindly thought. Surely many a mistress of a large household, or mother of a large family, might follow the example of Lady Somebody?

And so, for it had now grown dusk, and the cook was busy sending up the extensive tea of both patients and nurses, my first visit ended.

It was out of my power to do what several lady visitors, formally appointed, are now doing; visiting the wards every week, making acquaintance with the children, bringing them toys, and picture-books; finally, when they go out of the hospital, following them to their homes, and trying to influence for good, both them and their parents. But, two months after, I contrived to pay an unpremeditated solitary little visit, to see if the second impression justified the first.

The day was one of those bright afternoons in early March, when children inaugurate the return of spring by having tea by daylight; when, if about four o'clock you take a walk through a country village, or even a London suburb, the air seems full of a distant murmur of children at play in the lengthening twilight. It makes you feel, you know not how, as if your life were like that dawning year, to begin all over again; and brings back, for a minute or two, the sensation

of being a little child, going out to play before bedtime, and ignorant that there is anything in the world except tea and play. Even when I went up into the ward of the Children's Hospital, this influence of spring seemed to be felt: a warm lilac-tinted sunset was shining into the room, penetrating to every bed, and, I doubt not, making its occupant a little more cheery, a little less weary and suffering.

It was tea-time, and each table had its cup of milk-and-water, and its plate of bread and butter, most of which I was glad to see fast disappearing. One little girl, who had a few days since undergone amputation of the foot, had craved for "a tart," and the question had been compromised with bread and jam, which she was munching with great gusto, apparently as much to the nurse's delight as her own.

Here, as in the boys' ward afterwards, I observed one cheering fact—the faces were all new. Hardly a case which I had noted two months before, and I noted some rather carefully, was now in the hospital. They could not all have died; indeed, I understood there had been few deaths lately; therefore they must have gone out cured, or at least somewhat better. It was hardly credible, remembering how severe some of the cases were; but the extraordinary vitality of nature in the young might account for it. And it was a very hopeful sign of the good the hospital was doing.

Another was the convalescent room; where, of mornings, a certain amount of school-teachin

is given to those who are able for it; but now teaching was over for the day. As soon as the door was opened, there burst forth—not, alas! that joyous "hullabaloo," which deafens and gladdens the mother of healthy children on opening her nursery door, but still a very respectable shout of play.

"You're all getting better, little people, I see."

"Oh yes!" was the response; and half-a-dozen white, but still merry faces, looked up beamingly.

"What were you playing at?"

"Hide-and-seek!—Puss-in-corner!"—was variously shouted, as they began jumping about—feebly, indeed, but with plenty of life in them still.

I think any mother who has watched by the bedside of her sick child for days, or weeks, or months—still more, any mother who has knelt by the coffin of her dead child, would have turned away with her heart full, and said, "Thank God!"

Doubtless, this is the sunny side of the subject. Alas! there is another side to it;—of cureless evil, or only temporary alleviation of ills which can never be removed so long as their causes remain; so long as the diseased children of diseased parents struggle into life, and struggle through it, beset by every form of physical and moral degradation.

But, sad as this condition of things is, it is capable of remedy, and everybody can help to

mend it a little. Men can legislate wisely concerning it, investigate the worst evils, and consider about their possibilities of cure. Women can use their influence at home, and a little way beyond it, as do the lady-visitors of this hospital. And, perhaps, even children, if they were told of a house like this, where poor little boys and girls like themselves, lie all day sick, with nothing to amuse them, might be none the worse for putting aside a spare toy, or a picture-book, as mamma puts aside an old frock, or a half-worn pair of shoes, with the thought, "We'll send it to the Children's Hospital."

I meant not this to be a charity sermon—I hope I have not made it such—but confined it strictly to facts, which speak for themselves; yet I cannot help ending it as I began it, with that sentence which is the Alpha and Omega of all true charity, without which benevolence, so often thanklessly and cruelly repaid, gets weary of its work, and energy sinks hopeless, and the warmest hearts grow chilled, or hardened, until they remember what the Master says :—

"*Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of all these little ones, ye have done it unto* ME."

[P.S.—This, with several other papers of similar character written long ago, is reprinted here, because, while the insertion is not likely to hinder their sale for the use of the charity, their re-appearance in this book will act as a still wider advertisement of the objects for which they were intended.]

DEATH ON THE SEAS.

THIS New Year, which lately opened upon us, mild and sweet as spring, may, before its close, show us many sad and strange things, but it can show nothing sadder or stranger, nothing more utterly mysterious and incomprehensible—to our human eyes—than that vision of Death on the Seas, which startled all England into pity and terror; and then, as the facts of the story came out, made the nation's heart thrill with admiration of the heroic fortitude which exalts the merely terrible into the sublime, when, a few days ago, there landed at Plymouth the nineteen forlorn survivors of the Australian steam-ship *London*.

Every one now knows the history of that wreck; a catastrophe so sudden, so unexpected; in its causes taken (apparently) so completely out of the range of human prevision or prevention: and in its result creating so frightful a waste of human lives, destroyed in a manner which—dare we put into words the cry that must have gone up from many a desolated

home ?—seems so pitilessly cruel. In most calamities we have the comfort of finding some one to blame, for carelessness or neglect, frantic folly or deliberate wickedness ; but here (so far as we can see) is nothing of the kind. The elements, and they alone, seem to have banded themselves together against the doomed vessel ; it fell helplessly, not into the hands of man, but of Him of whom we say—and herein is the only lightening of the dark horror of the tale—"And He made the seas also."—As He made death, and sickness, and physical and mental pain, and all else that came into our world with or through sin—how ? and why ? We must wait, if through all eternity, until He Himself sees fit to answer that question.

Even as we must wait till the sea shall give up these dead, to whom death came in such a terrible shape ; and yet, after all, they may have died more easily than we shall die upon household pillows, and they sleep as safely and sweetly at the bottom of the Atlantic as we shall sleep under churchyard daisies. Oh, if we could only think so ! if we could forget *how* they died, and cease to ask of Providence desperately and blindly, *why* they died—those two hundred and twenty souls, who went down in the full flush of strength, with their eyes wide open to the coming death ; when—on that Thursday afternoon—(just about two o'clock, while half England was sitting down cheerily to its family dinner-tables), in the wild Bay of Biscay the good ship *London*, "settling down stern fore-

most, turned up her bows into the air, and sank beneath the waves."

They cannot be separately recorded—that mass of human beings—men, women, and children, every one of whom will be missed and mourned by some other one, perhaps by many, both in England and Australia. Most of them, probably, lived obscurely in quiet homes, outside of which they would never have had their names mentioned, but for those brief *Times* sentences which chronicled the manner of their dying. Otherwise, who would ever have heard of "Miss Marks, of Old Kent Road," who "was at first almost frantic, yet when the boat left she stood calmly on deck bare-headed, and waved an adieu to Mr. Wilson;" of "Miss Brooker, from Pimlico," who "was heard to say, as she wrung her hands, 'Well, I have done as much as I could, and can do no more,' and then became outwardly calm;" and of "Mrs. Price, Mrs. Wood (who had with her her husband and five children), Miss Brooker, and Miss Marks, who read the Bible by turns in the second cabin."

But here is what the *Western News* says of them—these hapless two hundred, just taken from warm English firesides, Christmas dinners, and New Year's gatherings, to be taught, as only the Divine Spirit teaches, and in a manner none can understand until they learn it—how to die.

"It was at 10 o'clock on the morning of that fatal Thursday that Captain Martin had the terrible task of making known to the 200 passengers that the ship was sinking, and that they must prepare for the worst. She was then as low in the water as the main chains. The whole of the passengers and crew gathered, as

with one consent, in the chief saloon, and having been calmly told by Captain Martin that there was no hope left, a remarkable and unanimous spirit of resignation came over them at once. There was no screaming or shrieking by women or men, no rushing on deck or frantic cries. All calmly resorted to the saloon, where the Rev. Mr. Draper, one of the passengers, prayed aloud, and exhorted the unhappy creatures by whom he was surrounded. Dismay was present to every heart, but disorder to none. Mothers were weeping sadly over the little ones about with them to be engulphed, and the children, ignorant of their coming death, were pitifully inquiring the cause of so much woe. Friends were taking leave of friends, as if preparing for a long journey; others were crouched down with Bibles in their hands, endeavouring to snatch consolation from passages long known or long neglected. Incredible, we are told, was the composure which, under such circumstances, reigned around. Captain Martin stationed himself in the poop, going occasionally forward, or into the saloon; but to none could he offer a word of comfort by telling them that their safety was even probable. He joined now and then for a few moments in the public devotions, but his place to the last was on the deck. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the water gaining fast on the ship and no signs of the storm subsiding being apparent, a small band of men determined to trust themselves to the mercy of the waves in a boat rather than go down without a struggle. Leaving the saloon, therefore, they got out and lowered away the port cutter, into which sixteen of the crew and three of the passengers succeeded in getting and in launching her clear of the ship. These nineteen men shouted for the captain to come with them, but with that heroic courage which was his chief characteristic, he declined to go with them, saying, 'No, I will go down with the passengers; but I wish you God speed and safe to land.' The boat then pulled away, tossing about helplessly on the crests of the gigantic waves. Scarcely had they gone eighty yards, or been five minutes off the deck, when the fine steamer went down stern foremost with her crowd of human beings, from whom one confused cry of helpless terror arose, and all was silent for ever."

In other versions of the story, so heroic that its horror melts into beauty—some three or four names stand out clearer than the rest. And though now far away from praise or blame, if they ever thought of either—they, living there four days in full front of death—still it is some comfort to record all we can learn of what they

did and said, during the hours when they waited for that end, concerning which the only thing they knew was its inevitable certainty.

And first, the Captain—J. Bohun Martin. The brave race of British commanders will never furnish a finer specimen than this man, striving with fate to the utmost; and all hope being over, "calmly walking up and down the poop" of his slowly sinking ship. Nay, when the one boat put off—leaning over the bulwarks to give the crew their course—"E.N.E. by Brest,"—which they found to be correct; adding those last words to Mr. Greenhill the engineer, which, when told among the histories of "Shipwrecks and Disasters at sea," will yet make many a boy's heart thrill; "There is not much chance for the boat, there is none for the ship. Your duty is done—mine is to remain here. Get in and take command of the few that it will hold." Five minutes afterwards, he went down to the bottom—with his ship and all his passengers—this brave, good man, this true British sailor!

But surely, surely—

> "Although his body's under hatches,
> His soul has gone aloft."—

Of the Rev. Daniel Draper, we learn only that he was a Wesleyan Minister, "well known, and highly respected," in Australia, where he had resided thirty years, and whither he was returning with his wife, the daughter of one of the first missionaries to Tahiti. His devotedness must have been great. One thinks of him, the old man, for he must have been rather beyond

middle age, exhorting and praying to the last. "He was heard to say repeatedly, 'O God, may those who are not converted, be converted now —hundreds of them!'" And whoever may or may not agree with the special creed of the Wesleyan Minister, his faith, proved in face of a death as solemn as that of the primitive martyrs, must have been as strong and as sublime almost as theirs.

Side by side with the Christian missionary stands—in this awful picture—another figure, strangely different, and yet alike in many points —the actor. Many play-goers of ten years back may remember G. V. Brooke, whose acting, unequal as it was (and made more so by failings, upon which let there be all silence now!) possessed a certain kind of absolute genius. At one time his *Othello* put the town in a *furore;* and his *Hamlet,* so uncertainly performed that one night it would be Shaksperian, and the other mere buffoonery, is still vividly recollected by the present writer. His fine presence, his exquisite voice, made him—externally at least —the very personification of the Royal Dane. Recalling this,—how touching is the "last scene of all" in the career of the poor actor, seen "in a red Crimean shirt and trousers, bare-footed, with no hat on," working incessantly at the pumps, "more bravely than any man in the ship." And strangely touching is our final glimpse of him "four hours before the ship went down;"—"leaning with grave composure upon one of the half-doors of the companion; his

chin resting upon both his hands, and his arms on the top of the door, which he gently swayed to and fro, as he calmly watched the scene." He, too, sleeps well! "Alas, poor Yorick!"

But last in the list—and greatest, if we may count greatness by the amount of loss; the blank left, which, even as to worldly work and usefulness no other man can fill (or we think so now), comes the name of the Rev. Dr. Woolley, Principal of Sydney College. The newspapers tell his career; how, after taking a First Class at Oxford, and a Fellowship at University College, in which honours he was united with his friend Canon Stanley, Dean of Westminster, he became successively Head Master of Rossall School, in Lincolnshire; and of King Edward's School, at Norwich. Afterwards, being appointed a Professor of Sydney College, he sailed in 1852 for the "under world." Whether or not colonial life was suitable or pleasant to him, he laboured there incessantly, with abundant success, until eight or ten months ago, when he came home for rest. Many friends, with many tempting offers, urged him to stay at home, and still stronger was the temptation of his own nature. One who saw him during his latest days in England, writes of him thus:—

"His tastes were those of a refined and cultivated man. He told me that his stay here, mixing in the society of men of letters, had been a delight to him beyond what I, who was always in it, could conceive. He had met Tennyson and Browning—nothing could be more to his taste than the companionship of such men, with whom his own qualities made him a most welcome guest. He had in perfection the bright, gentle, cheery manner that characterises the best Oxford man. In stature he was small; but

his face most pleasant to look at. He was very active in all sorts of societies and institutions for the benefit of working men, and men engaged in business. A volume of his Colonial Lectures was lately published here—but who could criticise them now? His age must have been about fifty, but he looked younger. He had a wife and six children waiting his return to Sydney, whither, as I soon perceived, he was determined to go, for he felt his work lay there and his duty. He went back to fulfil his duty, and has fulfilled it—thus."

To the same friend he wrote—what, with all its personal details excised, can scarcely be a breach of confidence to print here, seeing how clearly it demonstrates the man—almost the last letter he ever did write—dated from Plymouth. Strange it is to look at the neat handwriting, the smoothly-folded paper, still fresh and new, and to think of where that tender, delicate, generous right hand lies now.

"My dear Sir,—Will you think me very impertinent if I venture to write to you about" —a matter of business concerning a young *protégée* of his. "We are wind-bound, and I almost hope that the wind, ill to us, may prove good to her.

"My wife knew her and her family at ——." And here follow minute, personal details, carefully and wisely given, showing a gentlemanly reticence in asking favours, mingled with the generous anxiety of a good heart, which even at that busy moment had time to spare for those who needed kindness, and for whom he expresses the keenest sympathy, because, as he ends by saying, "they are fighting a hard fortune brightly and bravely."

"I expect," he continues, "to sail to-day; so if you are inclined to give my young friend a trial, might I ask you to communicate with her." And then, after carefully giving the address and other particulars, he closes the letter so abruptly, that he omits the conclusion, date, and signature —probably summoned on board in haste. But the letter was posted and received, afterwards to be returned to the subject of it, and to become a permanent memorial of what another friend, writing to the *Times*, calls "the gentleness, almost feminine, of his nature: and the warmth and generosity of his heart."

And so he, also, went down with those lost in the *London*. The survivors report how, with the Rev. Mr. Draper—though, doubtless, in many points widely differing from him—Dr. Woolley conducted the religious services on the last Sunday, and, during the lingering suspense of those awful days, comforted the people with exhortation and prayer. Not much is said about him: but we know in what manner he would die, and help others to die. His public career may be told in other ways; but this one word is in remembrance of the man himself—the good man—John Woolley.

Thus they perished—these two hundred and twenty: summoned—why we know not—out of useful lives, and prosperous lives, and busy and happy lives; and the mystery of their sudden ending we dare not even attempt to understand. But we know we shall one day; that great day

when "the dead that are in their graves"—sea-graves as well as land-graves—"shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall live."

TO PARENTS.

GOING to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it (like the Devil in Job), it has sometimes occurred to me, that amidst the universal preaching of the duties of children to parents, a few words might well be said on the duties of parents to children. Can these few words do any harm? I trow not. The truth never does any harm. No child, blessed with even ordinarily good parents, will love and honour them any the less for whatever may be said against bad parents. And to try and sustain the authority of the latter by false pretences is as futile as setting up a fetish-idolatry instead of the true religion of the heart —that instinctive filial faith which is the foundation-stone of all law and order in the world. Nay, in the universe, for what would become of us in this weary existence, if we could not from its beginning to its ending, look up and say "Our Father"?

It is a solemn and terrible truth, that there are parents who no more deserve the name

than the sovereign of Dahomey deserves to be held as a "king, by the grace of God." Yet in one sense the "divine right" of both kings and parents is unalienable. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is an absolute law, given without reference to the worthiness of the individual parent; it being a duty which the child owes to himself, to honour his parents simply *as parents*, without considering whether or not they have fulfilled their duty. There is a limit beyond which human nature cannot be expected to go: when actual moral turpitude renders "honour" a perfect farce; when respect becomes a mockery, and obedience an impossibility. But even then one resource remains—and remains for ever—endurance and silence. The unworthy parent must be treated like the unworthy king, tacitly handed down from the position which he has proved himself unfit to occupy, neither injured nor insulted, simply deposed.

But these are exceptional cases, so exceptional that each must be decided on its separate merits; and in most instances the outside public, which takes such delight in criticising, condemning, or excusing them, is quite unfit to judge them at all. But there are innumerable other instances, not the "cruel fathers" or "heartless mothers" of fiction, but every-day, well-meaning, respectable people, who are nevertheless domestic Molochs, before whom every successive child must pass through the fire; ancient Remphans, requiring living human daily sacrifices—

precious indeed, for all sacrifice is lovely in the offerer—but none the less an unnecessary and cruel immolation, which lookers-on must regard with both pity and righteous wrath.

In how many ways, ignorantly or carelessly, do parents thus act as actual scourges to the children who were given them, not for their personal amusement, benefit, or pride, but for the sake of the children themselves! How entirely they seem to forget that each human soul which is sent to them through the mysteries of marriage and birth, is not their own to do as they like with, but a solemn charge, for which they will be accountable to God and man! If any weaknesses of theirs, love of power, love of ease, even love of love—often the deepest selfishness of all—lead them to ignore this charge, woe be to them and their children. "Unto the third and fourth generation" is a law, not of divine anger, but of divine inevitable necessity. One wicked father, or vicious, vile-tempered mother, often remains a family curse for a century.

It is at once the most awful responsibility, and the utmost consecration of parenthood, that of all human ties, this one requires most self-abnegation. And when we think how very few really unselfish people there are in the world—not many among women, of men almost none—we only wonder how so many decent folk do contrive somehow to bring up decent families,—or let them bring themselves up, as, strange to say, many excellent families often do. But the

very fact that children left almost entirely to themselves sometimes turn out better than those who have been subjected to the sharpest parental oversight—only drives us back by implication to the truth at which we started—how few people are in the least fitted to be parents.

And perhaps no wonder. Young people falling desperately in love, marrying in haste and repenting at leisure ; other people, not young, and certainly guiltless of any youthful follies, who commit the deliberate mature sin of making marriage a mere matter of convenience ; husbands wearing out their bodies and souls in the making of money, and wives frittering away their helpless, aimless lives in the extravagant spending of it—what can such as these know or feel of the duties of parenthood ?

At first it is a very pretty amusement, doubtless. How delighted papa is to make after-dinner pets of his fairy girls, and encourage the obstreperousness of his fine manly boys. And mamma, with a certain natural instinct that rarely fails even in the silliest of women, is a tolerably good mother so long as her children remain in the nursery. But when they grow into youths and maidens, requiring larger wisdom, a tenderer guidance ; when individual character asserts itself, as it will and must, in any creature worth becoming a man or a woman —then is the crisis—most difficult and dangerous—at which, alas, so many household histories break down.

The transition state of adolescence is a trying

time. The young folks, like all half-grown animals, are awkward, unwise, self-conceited, revolutionary; while the elders find it hard to believe that "the children" are, in reality, children no more; that characters have developed and tastes matured, very likely most opposite to their own, yet not necessarily inferior characters or erring tastes. Some minds, at once strong and narrow, find it nearly impossible to comprehend this. They do not perceive when the time comes, as come it must in every family, when it is the children's right to begin to think and act for themselves, and the parents' duty to allow them to do it; when it is wisest gradually to slacken authority, to sink "I command" into "I wish," to grant large freedom of opinion, and above all in the expression of it. Likewise, and this is a most important element in family union, to give license, nay, actual sympathy, to wandering affections, friendships, or loves, which, for the time being, seem to find the home circle too narrow and too dull.

No doubt, to the parents this is rather trying. It is hard for mamma to discover that her girl not only enjoys, but craves after, a month's visit in some lively household; that she likes the company of other girls, and forms enthusiastic friendships, which mamma (a lady of between forty and fifty) forgets that she herself ever had, and consequently thinks exceedingly silly, or idle, or wrong. Papa, too, cannot see why his boys—good, affectionate lads—should find it such dull work to stay at home

of an evening, or should prefer a sensation play —"so different from what the stage was in *my* time"—to the longest game of chess with himself, or the most learned conversation with his staid and sober friends. Yet all this is quite natural; the boys and girls are foolish, perhaps, but not in the least guilty. Well for the household in which this, the earliest of many impending changes, should be recognised at once, still better that the recognition should come first from the elder and wiser side of it.

But, alas, here intrudes a truth which should be touched reverently and delicately, and yet it cannot be passed over, for it is a truth—that all parents are *not* wiser than their children. Sometimes a boy, quick-witted, honest, and good, finds, as he grows up, that his father is not a man to be relied on, but one of those weak souls who, without positive harm in them, are ever sinking lower and lower, and dragging their family down with them—whose authority is a mere name, whose advice is fatal to follow. Many a clever lad has come to see, even before he is out of his teens, that his only chance of getting on in the world is to rely solely on himself, and give as wide a berth as possible to his natural guardian and guide—his father. Likewise, many a girl, generous, warm-hearted, and sensitive, on passing into discriminating womanhood, feels, and cannot help feeling, that if her mother had not been her mother, she would never have chosen her even as an ordinary acquaintance. These are bitter discoveries, end-

ing in sharp daily agonies, irremediable, incommunicable. Happily the instinctive natural bond, added to the familiar habit of a lifetime, is so strong, that sometimes the sufferers themselves do not seem to feel their position quite so keenly as lookers-on, who own no softening influence of custom or affection.

These sufferings are not the less real because they sometimes take the comical aspect. Witty writers have exhausted their wit on the sad spectacle, common enough in this commercial country, of parvenus, coarse and vulgar, who are perfect terrors to their educated children. But this is a small misfortune. A man seldom raises himself very high without having something to give to society equivalent to what he has won from it. Hundreds now-a-days carry with them into handsome houses, noble halls, and even palace doors, the traces of their humble origin—not pleasant, indeed, and sometimes comical,—but quite bearable, from the inherent worth or talent of the individual, and never warranting the slightest complaint or disrespect from a dutiful child. Far worse to bear is that ingrained coarseness of nature, not breeding, common to all ranks, which makes many a daughter blush scarlet at things her mother says and does, which yet she can neither prevent nor notice. And what can be sorer for a young man, high-minded and chivalrous, than to live in perpetual dread lest his father, the head of the house, should disgrace it by some small meanness, some "indirect crook't ways,"

which force any honest observer, even his own son, to perceive, that though he may be a Crœsus of money, or a nobleman in rank, he is certainly not a gentleman?

Between these opposite poles of tragedy and comedy lies an intermediate range of miseries, small indeed, but sorely hard to bear. One is when, as is patent to everybody except the parents themselves, the elder generation is, in mental and moral calibre, decidedly inferior to the younger. Not bad people, but only narrow: narrow in thought, and word, and deed; unable to recognise that what lies beyond their own limited vision has any existence whatsoever. These sort of people are very trying in all relations, the more so because, so far as they go, they are often exceedingly estimable. Only if nature has made one of their children in any way different from themselves, of larger mould and wider capacities, the extent to which that child is martyrised, even with the very best intentions, is sometimes incredible.

Yet outside, everybody says what excellent parents they are, and what a happy home their children must have! a fact of which they themseves are most thoroughly convinced. How can the young people weary of it for a moment? How can Mary, a charming, well educated, and perhaps very clever young woman, desire any other companion than her mother? Since, of course, a mother is the best and closest companion for every girl. Most true, but not "of course," nor in virtue of the mere accident of motherhood.

Sympathy comes by instinct, and confidence must be, not exacted, but won. Mary may have the strongest filial regard for that dear and good woman, to whom she owes and is ready to pay every duty that a daughter ought, and yet be inwardly conscious that nature has made the two so different in tastes, feelings, disposition, that if she were to open her heart to her, her mother would not understand her in the least. Not to speak of the difference of age, greater or less, and the not unnatural way in which elderly people who do not retain youthfulness of heart, as happily many do to the last day of life, grow out of sympathy with the young. But Providence having constituted these two mother and daughter, they must get on together somehow. And so they do. Though Mary in her secret soul may writhe sometimes, she loves mamma very dearly, and would love her better still if she would only let her alone to follow her own tastes in any lawful way. But this mamma cannot do. She is like the goose with the young cygnet, always pitying herself because her child is unlike other people's children, wearing the girl's life out with endless complaints and impossible exactions, until at last Mary sinks into passive indifference, or bitter old-maidism, or plunges into a reckless marriage —anything, anywhere, only to get away from home.

John's case is not so hard, in one sense, he being a man and Mary only a woman, but it is far more dangerous. She may be made

merely wretched; he wicked, by this narrow vexatious rule. Why should John, who is only three-and-twenty, presume to hold a different opinion on politics, religion, or aught else, from his father? Papa is the older, and of course knows best; papa has had every opportunity of forming his judgment on every subject; and he has formed it, and there it is, carefully cut and dried, easy and comfortable, without any of those doubts which are the torture and yet the life of all ardent, youthful spirits. There it is, and John must abide by it, hold his tongue, and take his obnoxious newspapers and heterodox books out of the way; which John, being a lover of peace, and trained to honourable obedience, very likely does; but he cherishes either a private contempt—we are so scornful when we are young!—or an angry rebellion against the narrow-mindedness that would compel him into his father's way of thinking, simply because it is his father's. Be the lad ever so good, a lurking sense of injustice cannot fail to chafe him, and injustice is one of the most fatal elements that, at any age, can come into the sacred relation between parent and child.

Parents know not what they are doing when they rouse this feeling—the burning, stinging consciousness of being unfairly treated, disbelieved, misjudged, selfishly or wantonly punished. You find it in the maddest mob, the roughest public school, the most riotous public assembly, this rough, dogged sense of justice; dangerous to tamper with, even in the slightest degree.

Far wiser is it for a parent to acknowledge to ever so young a child, "I was wrong, I made a mistake," than to go on enforcing a false authority, or compelling a blind obedience, driving the child to exclaim, or inly feel, which is worse, "You are not my ruler, but my tyrant!"

Yet many a severe parent is deeply loved. "My father was a stern man," you sometimes hear said, while the rare tear of self-restrained middle age falls unchecked over the grave's side. "He kept us in order. We were all rather afraid of him; but he was invariably just. He never broke his word, nor forgot his promise. He punished us, but not in passion: he ruled us strictly, but it was never to gratify his own love of power. If he had thrashed us twenty times, we should have submitted to it, because we knew that whatever he did was done for conscience' sake, and not out of wantonness or anger. I may bring up my children differently in some things—perhaps I do—but I'll never hear a word said against *him*. He was a just man—my father."

A just man, and an unselfish woman; these are the two first qualities which constitute true parenthood.

In this question of selfishness. Readers may start with horror at such an impossible anomaly as a selfish mother, a jealous, exacting father; and yet such there are. Especially after the children are grown up, and nature, gratitude, and the world's opinion, all agree that no devotedness can be too perfect, no sacrifices too

great. Ay! but it is one thing what the child ought to offer, and another what the parent should accept. Most lovely is it to see a daughter cheerfully resigning all the external enjoyments of life, to devote herself to the higher happiness of being the sole stay and cheer of some helpless father, or solitary, sickly mother; and sweet, even amid all its daily renunciations, is the sense of duty fulfilled and comfort imparted. But to see a parent fretful, complaining, exacting, grudging the child a week's absence from home, not for love, *that* would teach self-sacrifice, but from the selfish enjoyment or ease which the accustomed companionship brings, yielding to the natural dislike of old age for any new association, and tacitly or openly keeping the young people in such bondage that they dare not ask a friend to tea, or accept an invitation—"Papa would not like it;" "Mamma might be annoyed"—this is a sight which lowers all the dignity of parenthood, and degrades filial duty into mere servitude. Yet many such cases there are, inflicted by really good parents, who are not aware that they are doing any harm, and who, in their narrow selfishness, cannot perceive that the life which is to them merely "a quiet life," suited to their age and infirmities, is slowly taking all the spirit and brightness out of younger hearts, driving the boys into dissipation and folly, and dragging "the girls" (of thirty and upwards) down into premature old-maidism, dull, discontented, helpless, and forlorn. Such a life, passing gradually on into life's melancholy

decline, in a round of uninteresting, compelled duties, is as different from the free, warm devotion of real filial love, as slow murder is from voluntary and glad self-sacrifice.

But here a word, lest this essay, which is especially addressed "To Parents," not being guarded, like income-tax or census papers, from any other unlawful eyes, should be taken as a loophole of excuse by readers like a certain young impertinent of my acquaintance, who, being lectured on the text, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," immediately pointed out its correlative, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

When we speak of a parent being "deposed," we mean merely from the exercise of an authority which has become a farce, and the exaction of an obedience which a higher law, that of conscience, renders impossible. But once a parent, always a parent. It is a bond which, though in one sense a mere accident, is, in another sense, stronger than any tie of mere personal election, since it came by the ordination of Providence. It may be a great burden, even a great misfortune, but there it is: and nothing but death can end it. No short-comings on the parental side can abrogate one atom of the plain duty of the child—submission so long as submission is possible, reverence while one fragment of respect remains; and, after that, endurance. To this generation of young England, which is apt to think so much of itself, and so little of its elders and superiors, we cannot too strongly

uphold the somewhat out-of-date doctrine, "Honour thy father and thy mother." Ay, though they may be very simple, common people: infirm in intellect, uneducated, unrefined: guilty of many short-comings of temper, judgment, and even glaring errors—still, honour them, and, when honour fails, bear with them.

The question then arises, what, and for how long, a child ought to bear. And here Christianity would reply with the doctrine of "seventy times seven," pleading, also, that if to a brother so much is to be forgiven, how much more so to a parent. Ay, *forgiven*. But Christianity nowhere commands that a grown-up man or woman is to sacrifice honour, conscience, peace—in fact, the real worth of a lifetime—to either brethren or parents. Therefore, when things come to this pass, that the child, by "honouring" the parent would actually dishonour God, and defile his own soul by acting contrary to his conscience, there, so far, the duty ends. Let him or her assert, as an individual existence, the right of self-preservation—let them part. At least let the division be made firm and clear enough to secure independence of thought and action, so that the parent can no longer injure or oppress the child.

For lesser trials, the amount of patience and long-suffering shown by the child to the parent ought to be almost unlimited. At the same time, it is quite possible for young men or young women quietly to assert their individuality, and carry out, without any obnoxious rebellion, their

own plan of life, even if it does differ more or less from their parents. Exceeding gentleness and yet firmness, perfect respect in word and deed, straightforwardness, honesty, and yet a courageous self-dependence, will rarely fail to win their way under ever such difficult circumstances. And one hardly knows which to despise most—the cowardice which looks like reverence, and the underhandedness which shams obedience, or that open rebellion which hastily assumes the position, more degrading to itself than to the worst of parents—that of "a thankless child."

One word more, on that prime source of misery between parents and children: marriage.

Unquestionably, if any third human being has a right to interfere in the choice which two other human beings make of one another "for better, for worse," it is a parent. No one else! neither brother, sister, aunt, uncle, cousin, nor any of the numerous relations and friends who always seem to consider a projected marriage their especial business, and not that of the lovers at all. But, happily, in our country at least, none of these, nay, not even parents, have absolute legal authority, either to make or to mar the divine institution of holy matrimony. Either John or Mary may, having arrived at years of discretion, at any time walk out of the paternal house and into the nearest church, or register office, and marry anybody. And if the marriage be at all creditable, even society will wink at it; nay, perhaps smile at the "indignant parents." But

a higher law than that of society enacts that such a decided step should not be taken until the last extremity.

Most natural are all the hesitations, doubts, pathetic little jealousies, and pardonable touchinesses of parents about to lose their children. It is hard to see your winsome girl, the flower of your life, plant herself, in her very sweetest bloom, in another man's garden. Hard, too, to watch your best loved son so absorbed that he has neither eyes nor ears for mother, sister, or any creature living, except "*that* young woman." Nevertheless, that a man should leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, is a law so immutable, so rational, that those who selfishly set their faces against it, parents though they be, are certain to reap their punishment. They may live to see sons, whom they have thwarted in a pure first love, turn to a coarse passion degrading and destroying to body and soul; daughters, denied a comparatively humble engagement with some honest penniless lover, fretfully "withering on the virgin thorn," or seeking loveless worldly marriages, which are the crushing out of all womanliness, everything that, by making life happy, would also have made it worthy.

Sons and daughters will marry, and they ought to marry. Selfishness alone would hinder in any young man the lawful desire for a home of his own, or in any young woman the natural instinct for some one dearer than father, mother, brother, or sister, however precious these all may be. Every head, and every member of a family

who loves the other members wisely and well, will not only not prevent, but encourage in every lawful way, the great necessity of life to both men and women—a prudent, constant, holy love, and a happy marriage.

One word to the parents, which of course the young people are not intended to hear.

Don't you think, my good friends, that parents as you be, with every desire for your child's happiness, it was a little unfair to give your Mary every opportunity of becoming attached to Charles, and Charles, poor fellow, all possible chance of adoring Mary? Could you expect him to see her sweet womanly ways, which make her the delight of her father's home, and not be tempted to wish her for the treasure of his own? Is it not rather hard now to turn round and object to their marrying, because, forsooth, you "never thought of such a thing," or, "Mary might have done better," or, "Charles was not the sort of person you thought she would fancy," or—last shift, and a very mean one—you "rather hoped she would not marry at all, but stay with her old father and mother"?

Hold there! We will not suppose any parents in their sober senses to be guilty of such sinful selfishness. Let us pass to the next objection, commonly urged against almost all marriages, that the parties are the last persons which each was expected to choose. Expected by whom? The world at large, or their own relations? The world knows little enough, and cares less, about these matters. And sometimes, strange

to say, two people who happen really to love one another, also know one another, a little better than all their respected relations put together—even their parents. They have made (or ought to—for we are granting that the case in point is no light fancy, but a deliberate attachment — there is great meaning in that old-fashioned word)—that solemn election, binding for life, and—as all true lovers hope and pray—for eternity. They have cast their own lot, and are ready to abide by it. All its misfortunes or mistakes, like its happinesses, will be their own. Give your advice honestly and fully; exact a fair trial of affection, urge every precaution that your older heads and tougher hearts may suggest, and then, O parents, leave your children free. If there is one thing more than another in which sons and daughters who are capable of being trusted at all, deserve to be trusted unlimitedly, it is choice in marriage.

I have lived somewhat long in the world; have watched many a love affair "on" and "off," gathering, rising, then breaking and vanishing like a wave of the sea; have seen many a strange union turn out well, and many a seemingly smooth and auspicious one end in much unhappiness; but I never saw any single instance in which overweening and irrational opposition to any marriage, on the part of parents or friends, did not end in misery. It either forced on to unsuitable and hasty union some fancy or passion that might otherwise have died a peaceful natural death, or it clouded, for years

at least, two innocent lives; or if this were spared and the marriage accomplished, it sowed seeds of strife and bitterness between families which no after pacification could ever quite root out. Parents, whatever you do, be humble enough never to attempt to play Providence with your children!

But suppose it is not so. Suppose that Mary's father forbids Mr. Charles his house, or Charles's kindred, having taken an insurmountable prejudice against Mary, swear that if he marries her they will never have anything more to say to him? What are the young couple to do? Are they to sacrifice the happiness of their mutual lives? Is Charles to sail for Australia, and Mary to go mourning all her days? Some strict moralists might say, "Yes. Break your hearts, both of you, but dare not to disobey your parents." Easy-going worldly-wise reasoners might agree that there would be no heart-break in the matter, that both would soon "get over it," and marry somebody else. Possibly; but the risk is considerable, involving great responsibility to the parents.

Also to the lovers themselves, who, from the instant that they have acknowledged mutual affection, have a right to one another and a duty to perform towards one another, little less sacred than that of husband and wife. Their trial is no doubt most sharp—hard in the present, sad in the future—for how bitter it must be to give to possible children the opportunity of one day saying, "You married without your parents'

consent—you cannot blame me if I do the same." Yet, granting its full weight to every argument, the decision arrived at in so cruel a conjuncture must, in all calmly judging minds, surely be the same.

Unquestionably, a deliberate, patiently-delayed, well-thought-of marriage, open to no rational objection, and breaking no law either human or divine, ought to be carried out, with or without the consent of parents.

No clandestine proceedings can ever be justifiable. But when all efforts to break down prejudice and win esteem have failed, a son, or even a daughter, though that seems harder, has a perfect right to quit, openly and honestly, the parental roof. "Farewell," either must say—ah how sorrowfully! yet it ought to be said—"I have tried my utmost to win you over, and it is in vain. I am not called upon to sacrifice, not only my own happiness, but another's. The just God be judge between us. I must go."

A terrible alternative, yet there can be no other; and surely if the parents never relent—never forgive—the just God will judge it tenderly, and the "curse causeless" shall not come.

But such a crisis rarely occurs in a family where the parents have themselves done their duty. No wise father would ever bring into the intimate society of his daughters a young fellow of whom, as a son-in-law, he would utterly, and with fair reasons, disapprove. And, reckless as men's passions sometimes are, very few sons of

really good mothers would be likely so to have lost that ideal of womanhood which it is a mother's own fault if she does not set before her sons, that they would desire to bring into the family any girl so altogether unworthy and objectionable that her entrance therein ought to be prevented by every lawful means. The safest and only way to make children marry rightly is by setting before them such ensamples of true manhood and womanhood that they would shrink from choosing a wife or husband inferior to their own parents.

And when such is the case, when home is really home, what a haven of rest it is! How the children, married or single, will remember it, yearn over it, delight to revisit it, as the safest, sunniest nest! And as years roll on, and they have long ceased to be "the children" to anybody but the old father and mother, how strong is that parental influence which has succeeded the resigned authority—how perfect the love which casts out even the shadow of fear! Duty—sacrifice—the words are a mere name, a pleasant jest, if by means of them can be given the smallest pleasure to the good parents. No self-denial seems too great if it can requite them—no, they never can be requited—but show them in some degree their children's appreciation of their innumerable self-denials, never fully understood till now, when the children have become parents themselves.

And when they really grow old—though the second generation will never quite believe it—

how their weaknesses are held sacred, and their utmost infirmities dear! How the third generation are taught from babyhood to consider it the greatest honour to be of any use to grandpapa and grandmamma! How their sayings are repeated, their wisdom upheld, and their virtues canonised into a family tradition, ay, years after the beloved heads, white and reverend, have been laid tenderly "under the daisies"!

For parents, real parents, are never forgotten. Good old maids and kindly old bachelors may be remembered for many a year; but those others on whom has been conferred, with all the sorrows and cares, the great honour and happiness of parenthood, have mingled their life with the permanent life of the world. Their qualities descend, and their influence is felt, through uncounted generations. Thorny and difficult may have been their mortal path, many their anxieties and sharp their pangs, but they have done their work, and they inherit its blessing. They die, but in their posterity they enjoy a perpetual immortality.

MISERY-MONGERS.

"POOR fellow," said A. to B., looking after C. with mingled regard and regret. "He will never be happy himself, nor make any other human being happy."

It was most true. C. is an excellent man: honest, kindly, well-intentioned; prosperous in business; in his domestic relations rather fortunate than otherwise; blessed with good health, good looks, and rather more than the average of brains. Altogether an enviable person—externally. Yet his friend, apparently much less lucky than himself, regarded him with the profoundest pity. "No, C. will never be happy. Nothing in this world would ever make him happy." And nothing ever did.

C. is no uncommon character. He was a misery-monger: one of those moral cuttle-fishes who carry about with them, and produce out of their own organism, the black liquid in which they swim. If they could only swim in it alone! Is it any good to show them their own likeness

—these poor creatures, who, without any real woe, contrive to make themselves and everybody about them thoroughly miserable. Can we shake them out of their folly by a word of common sense? Probably not; your confirmed misery-monger is the most hopeless being in creation; but there are incipient stages of the complaint, which, taken in time, are curable. To such, it may not be unadvisable to present these incurables as a wholesome "shocking example."

Misery-mongers (the word is not to be found in Johnson, yet it suits) are those who do not really suffer affliction, but make a trade of it—and often a very thriving business too. They are scattered among every class, but especially they belong to the "genus irritabile"—the second or third-rate order of people who live by their brains. Not the first order—for the highest form of intellect is rarely miserable. True genius of the completest kind is not only a mental but a moral quality. Itself creates the atmosphere it lives in: a higher and rarer air than that of common earth.

"Calm pleasures there abide;—majestic pains."

To a really great man, the petty vanities, shallow angers, and morbid crotchets of smaller natures are unknown. Above all, genius gives to its possessor a larger, clearer vision; eyes that look outwards, not inwards. That enormous Ego—the source of so many puny woes to lesser minds—rarely grows rampant in a man who is great

enough to know his own littleness. Consequently, he is saved at once from a hundred vexations which dog the heels of your giant of genius—who is always measuring himself with Tom, Dick, and Harry, and requiring, or fancying he requires, larger clothes, longer beds, and bigger hats than they. When Tom, Dick, and Harry, annoyed at these exactions, find that the supposed son of Anak is not so very much taller than themselves, and cut him up in reviews or snub him in society, great is the vexation of spirit he endures. But your real giant, who never thinks of Tom, Dick, and Harry at all, takes the matter quite calmly: whatever be his own altitude, he sees before him an ideal far higher than himself, and ten times higher than anything they see, and this keeps him at once very humble in his own opinion, and very indifferent to theirs. The present essayist has been fortunate enough to know a good many such, and has always found them neither strutting like peacocks nor marching on stilts, but walking about as mild and tame as the elephant in the Zoological Gardens, and as apparently unconscious of their own magnitude. It is your second-rate, your merely clever man, who, ape-like, is always rattling at the bars of his cage, moping and mowing to attract attention, and eagerly holding out his paw for the nuts and apples of public appreciation, which, if he does not get—why, he sits and howls!

Such people have rarely suffered any dire

calamity or heart-deep blow. To have sat down with sorrow—real sorrow—frequently gives a steadiness and balance to the whole character, and leaves behind a permanent consistent cheerfulness, more touching, and oh! how infinitely more blessed, than the mirth of those who have never known grief. Also, after deep anguish comes a readiness to seize upon, make the best of, and enjoy to the uttermost, every passing pleasure: for the man who has once known famine will never waste even a crumb again. Rather will he look with compassionate wonder at the many who scatter recklessly their daily bread of comfort and peace; who turn disgusted from a simple breakfast because they are looking forwards to a possible sumptuous dinner; or throw away contemptuously their wholesome crust, because they see, with envious eyes, their opposite neighbour feeding on plum-cake.

No, the miserable people whom one meets are not the really unhappy ones, or rather those who have actual misfortune to bear, there being a wide distinction between misfortune and unhappiness. How often do we see moving in society, carrying everywhere a pleasant face, and troubling no one with their secret care, those whom we know are burdened with an inevitable incommunicable grief: an insane wife, a dissipated husband, tyrannical parents, or ungrateful children? Yet they say nothing about it, this skeleton in the cupboard, which their neighbours all know of or guess at, but upon which they themselves quietly turn the key, and

go on their way; uncomplaining, and thankful to be spared complaining. What good will it do them to moan? It is not they, the unfortunate men, nor yet the men of genius, who contrive to make miserable their own lives and those of everybody connected with them. The true misery-mongers are a very different race; you may find the key to their mystery in Milton's famous axiom,

> "Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,
> Doing or suffering."

There, for once, the devil spoke truth. Miserable people are invariably weak people.

> "O well for him whose will is strong,
> He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
> He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong."

Of course not, because his firm will must in time shake off any suffering; and because no amount of externally inflicted evil is to be compared to the evil which a man inflicts upon himself; by feebleness of purpose, by cowardly non-resistance to oppression, and by a general uncertainty of aims or acts. He who sees the right and cannot follow it; who loves all things noble, yet dare not fight against things ignoble in himself or others; who is haunted by a high ideal of what he wishes to be, yet is for ever falling short of it, and tortured by the consciousness that he does fall short of it, and that his friends are judging him, not unjustly, by what he is rather than by what he vainly aims at being—this man is, necessarily, one of the un-

happiest creatures living. One of the most harmful too, since you can be on your guard against the downright villain, but the æsthetic evil-doer, the theoretically good and practically bad man, who has lofty aspirations without performances, virtuous impulses and no persistence —against such a one you have no weapons to use. He disarms your resentment by exciting your pity; is for ever crying "Quarter, quarter!" and, though you feel that he deserves none, that his weakness has injured yourself and others as much as any wickedness, still, out of pure compassion, you sheathe your righteous sword and let him escape unpunished. Up he rises, fresh as ever, and pursues his course, always sinning and always repenting, yet claiming to be judged not by the sin but the penitence; continually and obstinately miserable, yet blind to the fact that half his misery is caused by himself alone.

And this brings us to the other root of misery-mongering—selfishness. None but a thoroughly selfish person can be always unhappy. Life is so equally balanced that there is always as much to rejoice as to weep over, if we are only able—and willing—to rejoice in and for and through others.

"Time and the hour run through the roughest day"—

if we will but let it be so—if we will allow our sky to clear and our wounds to heal—believing in the wonderfully reparative powers of Nature when she is given free play. But these poor souls will not give her free play; they prefer to

indulge in their griefs, refusing obstinately all remedies, till they bring on a chronic dyspepsia of the soul, which is often combined with a corresponding disease of the body.

It may seem a dreadful doctrine to poetical people, but two-thirds of a man's woes usually begin—in his stomach. Irregular feeding, walking, and sleeping, with much too regular smoking, are the cause of half the melancholy poetry and cynical prose with which we are inundated. Also of many a miserable home, hiding its miseries under the decent decorum which society has the good taste and good feeling to abstain from prying too closely into; and of not a few open scandals, bankruptcies, and divorce cases. If a modern edition of the Miseries of Human Life were to be written, the author might well trace them to that unsanitary condition, first of body and then of mind, into which civilisation, or the luxurious extreme of it, has brought us, and upon which some of us rather pride ourselves, as if it were a grand thing to be "morbid;" quite forgetting the origin of the word, and that such a condition, whether mental or physical, or both combined, is, in truth, not life, but the beginning of death, to every human being.

And suppose it is so. Granted that I am a man with "nerves," or "liver," or any other permanent ailment, am I to make my ill-used and consequently ill-conducted interior a nuisance to all my family and friends? Did no man's head ever ache but mine? Is no one else blessed (or cursed) with a too sensitive organism,

obliged to struggle with and control it, and at least contrive that it shall trouble others as little as possible? Why should my wife, sister, or daughter be expected to bestow unlimited sympathy upon every small suffering of mine, while she hides many an ache and pain which I never even know of, or knowing, should scarcely heed, except so far as it affected my own personal comfort, or because it is a certain annoyance to me that anybody should require sympathy but myself? Have my friends no anxieties of their own, that I should be for ever laying upon them the burden of mine—always exacting and requiting nothing? People like a fair balance —a cheery give and take in the usefulnesses as well as the pleasantnesses of life. Is it wonderful, then, that, after a time, they a little shrink from me, are shy of asking me to dinner?—at least, often. For they feel I may be a cloud upon the social board; my moods are so various, they never know how to take me. They are very sorry for me, very kind to me, but, in plain English, they would rather have my room than my company. I am too full of myself ever to be any pleasure or benefit to others.

For it is a curious fact that the most self-contained natures are always the least self-engrossed; and those to whom everybody applies for help, most seldom ask or require it. The centre sun of every family, round which the others instinctively revolve, is sure to be a planet bright and fixed, carrying its light within itself. But a man whose soul is all darkness, or who is

at best a poor wandering star, eager to kindle his puny candle at somebody else's beams, can be a light and a blessing to nobody.

And he may be—probably without intending it—quite the opposite. Who does not, in visiting a household, soon discover the one who contributes nothing to the happiness of the rest, who is a sort of eleemosynary pensioner on everybody's forbearance, living, as beggars do, by the continual exhibition of his sores, and often getting sympathy—as beggars get halfpence—just to be rid of him? Who does not recognise the person whose morning step upon the stair, so far from having "music in 't," sends a premonitory shiver, and even a dead silence, round the cheerful, chattering, breakfast-table?—whose departure to business, or elsewhere, causes a sudden rise in the domestic barometer?—nay, whose very quitting a room gives a sense of relief as of a cloud lifted off? Yet he may have many good qualities, but they are all obscured and rendered useless by the incessant recurrence to and absorption in self, which is the root of all his useless woes. And, alas! while believing himself—as he wishes to be—the most important person in his circle, our miserable friend fills really the lowest place therein—that of the one whom nobody trusts, nobody leans upon; whom everybody has to help, but who is never expected to help anybody. How could he? for in him is lacking the very foundation of all helpfulness—the strong, brave, cheerful spirit which, under all circum-

stances, will throw itself out of itself sufficiently to understand and be of use to its neighbour.

Truly, as regards usefulness, one might as well attempt to labour in an unlighted coal mine as to do one's work in the world in an atmosphere of perpetual gloom. Nature herself scorns the idea. Some of her operations are carried on in tender temporary shadow—but only temporary. Nothing with her is permanently dark, except the corruption of the grave. Whenever, in any man's temperament, is incurable sadness, morbid melancholy, be sure there is something also corrupt; something which shrinks from the light because it needs to be hid; something diseased, in body or mind, which, so far from being petted and indulged and glossed over with poetical fancies, needs to be rooted out—with a hand, gentle, indeed, but strong and firm as that of the good surgeon, who deals deliberately present pain for future good.

A healthy temperament, though not insensible to sorrow, never revels in it or is subdued by it; it accepts it, endures it, and then looks round for the best mode of curing it. We cannot too strongly impress on the rising generation—who, like the young bears, have all their troubles before them—that suffering is not a normal but an abnormal state; and that to believe otherwise is to believe that this world is a mere chaos of torment made for the amusement of the omnipotent—not God, but devil—who rules it. Pain must exist—for some inscrutable end—inseparable from the

present economy of the world; but we ought, out of common sense and common justice, and especially religion, to regard it not as the law of our lives, but as an accident, usually resulting from our breaking that law. We cannot wholly prevent suffering, but we can guard against it, in degree; and we never need wholly succumb to it till we succumb to the universal defeat, death preparatory to the immortal victory.

When one thinks of death—of how brief, at best, is our little day, and how quickly comes the end that levels all things, what folly seems the habit of misery!—for it grows into a mere habit, quite independent of causes. Why keep up this perpetual moan, and always about ourselves, because we are not rich enough, or handsome enough, or loved enough—because other people have better luck than we? Possibly they have;—and possibly not; for we all know our own private cares, but few of us know our neighbour's. And so we go on, always finding some pet grievance to nurse, and coaxing it from a trifling vexation into an incurable grief or an unpardonable wrong. Little matter what it is; to a man of this temperament any peg will do whereon to hang the gloomy pall, self-woven, of perpetual sorrow. Or else he spins it, spider-like, out of his own bowels, and when its filmy meshes grow into great bars between him and the sky, he thinks with his petty web he has blurred the whole creation.

Poor wretch! if he could only pull it down and sweep it away!—if he could accept his lot,

even though a hard one,—an afflicted stomach, sensitive nerves, a naturally bad temper, or an unnaturally empty purse. Still, my friend, grin and bear it. Be sure you do not suffer alone; many another is much worse off than you. Why not try to give him a helping hand, and strengthen yourself by the giving of it? For we do not wish to make a mock of you, you miserable misery-monger, since you are much to be pitied; and there is a sad reality at the bottom of your most contemptible shams. We would rather rouse you to forget yourself, and then, be sure, you will gradually forget your sufferings. And supposing these should remain in greater or less degree, as the necessary accompaniment of your individual lot or peculiar idiosyncrasy, still, according to the common-sense argument of the sage author of "Original Poems," remonstrating with an unwashed child,

> "If the water is cold, and the comb hurts your head,
> What good will it do you to cry?"

Alack! we are all exceedingly like naughty children; we do not enjoy being made clean.

And yet, some of us who have gone through a rather severe course of lavatory education, can understand the blessing of a sunshiny face—ay, even in the midst of inevitable sorrow. Some of us feel the peace that dwells ever at the core of a contented heart, which, though it has ceased to expect much happiness for itself, is ever ready to rejoice in the happiness of others. And many of us still show in daily life

the quiet dignity of endurance; of not dwelling upon or exaggerating unavoidable misfortune; of putting small annoyances in one's pocket, instead of flourishing them abroad in other people's faces, like the jilted spinster who "rushed into novel-writing, and made her private wrong a public nuisance." How much wiser is it to hide our wrongs, to smother our vexations, to bear our illnesses, whether of body or mind, as privately and silently as we can! Also, so far as it is possible, to bear them ourselves alone, thankful for sympathy, and help too, when it comes; but not going about beseeching for it, or angry when we do not get it, having strength enough to do without it, and rely solely on the Help divine.

For to that point it must always come. The man who is incurably and permanently miserable is not only an offence to his fellow-creatures, but a sinner against his God. He is perpetually saying to his Creator, "Why hast Thou made me thus? Why not have made me as I wanted to be, and have given me such and such things which I desired to have? I know they would have been good for me, and then I should have been happy. I am far wiser than Thou. Make me what *I* choose, and grant me what *I* require, or else I will be perpetually miserable."

And so he lives, holding up his melancholy face, poor fool! as an unceasing protest against the wisdom eternal—against the sunshiny sky, the pleasant earth, and the happy loving hearts that are always to be found somewhere therein.

Overclouded at times, doubtless, yet never quite losing their happiness while there is something left them to love—ay, though it be but a dirty crying child in the streets, whom they can comfort with a smile or a halfpenny.

Such people may be unhappy—may have to suffer acutely for a time—but they will never become misery-mongers. Theirs is a healthiness of nature which has the power of throwing off disease to the final hour of worn-out nature. Their souls, like their bodies, will last to the utmost limit of a green old age, giving and taking comfort, a blessedness to themselves and all about them. In their course of life many a storm may come; but it never finds them unprepared. They are sound good ships, well rigged, well ballasted; if affliction comes, they just "make all snug," as the sailors say, and so are able to ride through seas of sorrow into a harbour of peace—finally, into that last harbour, where may Heaven bring at last every mortal soul, even misery-mongers!

AN

OLD SCOTCH LOVE STORY.

THE MS. upon which this paper is founded came into my hands many years ago,—so many that I entirely forget through whom it came. I remember only that it was given to me with the remark, "Here, take this: it is a bit of human nature truer than any of your novels; you may use it if you like." But I never did; for only we authors know how exceedingly difficult it is to "use" nature, and how rarely it can be done without harming somebody and benefiting nobody.

Therefore I let the MS. lie by, year after year, unread. It was a dreary-looking "screed," filling the whole of an ancient copy-book, in a somewhat clerk-like hand—round, regular, formal, but decidedly illiterate, especially as to spelling. On the flyleaf—torn, yellow, soiled, and mildewed—was a name, "George Milne, His Book;" and a date, "Auchen"—something, the rest of the word being quite illegible.

This is the only name which I mean to give

bonâ fide; and there are so many George Milnes in Scotland, and so many places called Auchen—something or other, that it affords little or no clue to the inquisitive reader except the fact that the events recorded did take place in Scotland. Though they happened more than half a century ago, so that any one concerned therein is probably long dead, still I will take the tender precaution of falsifying every name of place or person, and of omitting all dates except the day of the month. Whether the story may "point a moral," I cannot tell. Our world of to-day is much the same as the world of yesterday: women still go on breaking men's hearts and ruining their lives, and men do the same to women, though the result here is less fatal, probably because there is something purer and higher in the wrecked material, so that better things are worked out of it. Still, a "bit of human nature" is always pathetic, and not always unprofitable.

The second leaf of the old copy-book commences the history thus:—

"Copy of statement of facts by William Campbell, Esquire, Writer in ——" (I leave the town blank), "written some time previous to September 29th, 18—, on which he terminated his existence."

"In drawing up an account of the facts of the connexion between Miss Robina Jamieson and myself, I shall confine myself to facts alone, without making comments or drawing inferences. This most distressing task has been forced upon me by late occurrences, by which I have been much injured, and for which (I say it with sorrow) I have been determined to seek

redress. I need not attempt to describe the anguish of mind which has compelled me to make the following disclosures."

These "disclosures" are terribly long-winded. They indicate plainly what sort of young man the writer was: gifted with a certain amount of talent, more appreciative than original—but enough to make him sensitive, egotistic, morbid. Not a bad fellow in his way—probably much more refined than other young men of his day and locality—we must remember he belonged to a remote country town in Scotland fifty years ago, and was then something over thirty. Not badly educated, apparently, and a man of some reading, as is obvious from his references to Shakespeare, Burns, Shenstone, and other writers. Of his external individuality, personal appearance, and so forth, I cannot give the slightest information, as he never in the remotest way alludes to it.

With these premises, let Mr. William Campbell, Writer, speak for himself:—

"Some years ago an intimacy and friendship commenced between Miss Jamieson and me, little known, I believe, except to ourselves. From what passed between us, I conceived myself warranted in paying my addresses to her. In this I may have been wrong, and perhaps I ought to admit that in a letter I stated to her that I had formed my attachment 'unauthorized.' This, however, was from motives of delicacy. The letter was written in August, 18— (seven years ago), and forwarded to Miss Jamieson at P——. I have no copy of it; the answer also is mislaid.

"In effect, my addresses were rejected. At the same time, I was strictly enjoined not to give up visiting at Birkenshaw (the lady's home). I felt disappointed; but from the way in which Miss Jamieson afterwards conducted herself towards me, I began to suspect she was not serious in her refusal. I, however, studied not to intrude myself, and as I felt delicate in speaking on the subject, and hearing her parents had been acquainted with

my application, I wrote Mr. Jamieson, asking his forgiveness if I had done anything wrong, and still continued visiting at Birkenshaw.

"Truth here compels me to state that Miss Jamieson now began to honour me with more attention than she had formerly done. When in town, she seldom failed to allow me the pleasure of accompanying her home; indeed she always told me when I was to be allowed that honour. My purpose in stating these facts is to show that I never at any time paid my addresses to Miss J. with the most distant view to the fortune she has lately received. Our intimacy continued and increased till the spring of 18— (the following year), when Mr. Blair left Kinnochar."

(Mr. Blair, who is never afterwards named, was probably some relative, owner of the property of Kinnochar, where the young lady was in the habit of staying, and which presently devolved to her.)

"Shortly afterwards the following note was left for me from Miss J. by one of the servants at Birkenshaw:—

"'If Mr. Campbell feels inclined to extend his evening walk, a friend will have the pleasure of showing him some birds' nests in the garden of Kinnochar.—Monday morning.'

"That I willingly obeyed need not be doubted. I had afterwards other notes of similar import. These facts I mention with regret, but am determined to tell the precise truth, if I tell it at all. It has been extorted from me by cruel injustice.

"Shortly after this, Mr. Jamieson became indisposed. I frequently visited him during his illness, and at these times Miss Jamieson made appointments with me for meetings at Kinnochar. Promises were made and vows of fidelity exchanged between us, when at the approach of autumn our meetings were interrupted by masons repairing the house, and I again visited at Birkenshaw. Miss J. at this time proposed that we should meet at Plainstanes, where she was going; and that her absence should not interrupt our intercourse, it was agreed that we should write to each other.

"On the 30th August I received the following letter:—

"'Particular circumstances have occurred which prevent my going to Plainstanes this week; I therefore will not trouble Mr. Campbell to be my correspondent at present. But as I intend to make out my visit a few weeks hence, I still propose troubling him to write me. I hope Mr. Campbell will pay us a visit at Birkenshaw within these few days, and he will very much oblige

"'ROBINA JAMIESON.'

"'P.S.—Mr. Jamieson's spirits are affected by this damp weather; nothing can raise them so much as Mr. Campbell's coming to see him.'"

How clearly one sees through this mist of years the formal yet coquettish young letter-writer—the vain, self-conscious, but good-natured recipient, ready to take trouble in amusing the old man, perhaps for vanity's sake, perhaps for love's. Not a bad fellow, though, as I said before. He goes on :—

"I still continued to visit at Birkenshaw. Promises were repeated over and over again. Shortly after, I received the following letter through a servant :—

"'We have received accounts of the death of my brother; he has fallen a victim to the bad climate of Jamaica. As I am afraid his loss will affect my father's spirits, could you, my dear sir, make it convenient to call on us some evening soon? You may think it strange of me to ask you to come out at present, but I trust to your good nature for excusing it, and there is not another out of my own family that I could apply to so readily; and believe me,

"'Your obliged

"'ROBINA JAMIESON.'

"I never failed to give due attention (writes the young man, who indeed could hardly have helped succumbing to such delicate feminine flattery), and from what passed between Miss J. and myself, I conceived by this time nothing could prevent our union. She complained if I was absent, and her parents did not discountenance my frequent visits.

"The next letter I received was through the post-office, addressed 'Mr. Renton,' to my care. This was my own suggestion, lest any of my clerks should open her letters.

"'BIRKENSHAW, *Thursday.*

"'My father is disappointed that you do not spend any evenings with him now, and I am afraid that I am the cause of your being such a stranger here. I suppose you cannot be ignorant of the report that the good people of —— have raised, and that it has prevented your coming to Birkenshaw, for fear my parents should adopt the compulsory system; but allow me to inform you they have too few daughters to force them on any man against his will. On my account they do not give young men a general invitation, for fear they should think they courted me;

but those that come are none the less welcome, and none more so than you. I expected to have got word of you in —— that would have saved me from writing, but I know you have too much honour than to expose me. Will you spend an evening here this week? and you will let me know by putting a note in the post-office before two o'clock to-day, and I shall take care to take it out, or in any way you choose, for I begin to think you wish to shun me; and believe me always,

"'Your much obliged

"'ROBINA JAMIESON.'"

One feels a sort of pity for the young woman, in having her unconscious letter copied, and kept, and republished by the lover, in spite of his "sense of honour." And yet stern feminine justice exacts the rigorous law that no woman worth the name ought to hold out the shadow of hope to a rejected swain, unless she has changed her mind, and means to marry him. Of course the poor fish leaped at the bait immediately:—

"When I received this letter (writes young Campbell), I had been a week absent from Birkenshaw. I went there immediately, and found an opportunity of telling Miss J. how much she was mistaken. (It is a curious instance of the formal manners of the last generation, that these lovers never seem to dream of addressing or speaking of one another as anything else than *Mr. Campbell* and *Miss Jamieson*.) My visits still continued, and both parents were satisfied that our union was to take place. The storm (probably some heavy snow) prevented my visiting her for a short time. I was in ill-health, and had fallen back a little in my business in consequence of having been at Aberdeen and twice in Edinburgh. Still I attended at Birkenshaw whenever I possibly could, and our intimacy continued and increased.

"Miss Jamieson now received accounts of the death of her uncle in Jamaica, that she and her mother had been left considerable sums in his will, and that she was his residuary legatee. After that I visited as formerly. From the opinion I had formed of her, I apprehended no change in her affections and behaviour; and in this I was at first not mistaken. I found her the same as usual.

"On Sunday, the 5th of May, I called at Birkenshaw, as I had before intimated to her father in a letter, and found Miss Jamieson at home. Old matters were talked about, and all our old

pledges and vows renewed. She declared that the fortune she had become possessed of would not alter her affections; that she was willing to become my bride. I asked if she had the consent of her parents. She most unequivocally declared she had, and the compact was solemnly sealed between us.

"It may here be necessary to state, as in her letter she gives it another meaning, that she had said to me, 'I mean to say Yes, but allow me a little time.'

"I answered 'Certainly, as much as you choose. It is nothing new; you have thought of it before, and something may intervene.'

"She replied, 'Nothing can possibly intervene. I am yours for ever.'

"She then mentioned where she would wish to reside, what house she would like purchased or taken, asking how far my means would go in such a purchase, and mentioning that she would have cash of her own soon, and I candidly told her the whole state of my finances. She also made a condition about my going to church. It may here be said, in reference to what she afterwards stated as to not being allowed a few hours' consideration, that our engagement took place between ten and eleven in the forenoon, and that I did not leave Birkenshaw till about nine at night."

Brief as it is, the young man's "Statement" gives a vivid picture of that May Sunday—a grave, quiet, Scotch Sunday—yet during which was transacted this formal, prudent, but passionate Scotch courtship, full of that queer mixture of outside coldness and inside romance which is the charm of the Scotch character. We see the lover, who had been played fast and loose with so long, determined at last for the second time to try his fate—

> "To put it to the touch,
> And win or lose it all;"

and the lady, earnest enough to say, "I am yours for ever," yet practical enough to inquire his means, and to select the house she should like to live in; also doubtless with a keen sense of respectability, making conditions about "going

to church," which duty the poetical swain was probably remiss in. And we can imagine the whole of that day of courtship "till about nine at night;"—the slow saunters round the old-fashioned garden, and the parting in the gloaming—the little idyll which each generation, and each individual therein, transacts turn by turn, but on which, in its fond minute particulars, Mr. Campbell's "Statement" is silent. He goes on:—

"My happy moments were soon broken in upon. On the Monday following Miss J. received accounts from her uncle's executor of the extent of the fortune she would receive in this country, as residuary legatee; likewise of that abroad, the amount of which could not as yet be ascertained. On the Friday morning Miss Jamieson, who had in the mean time written very particularly about the house, sent me the following letter:—

"'Can you, will you forgive me, if I ask you to give me back the promise I gave you on Sunday last? I then asked you for a few hours' consideration; had you given me that, it would have saved me this day. I then boldly declared my mother's consent was of no consequence. This is not the case: she never will consent. I did not mention your last letter, and I hope this correspondence will be kept as quiet as possible.

"'That this will give you pain I do not doubt, but better give it now than afterwards; and, believe me, you have little to regret in the want of any nearer connection with me, unless it is my money, and that is not one-tenth part what they say it is in the neighbourhood. That no one can love me better than you, I do not doubt; yet surely you might have come oftener to see me this spring, particularly when I heard of your being at Braeside. But it is needless to say more. I shall only add that there breathes not the man in Europe I at present prefer to you, but still I consider we may be better apart. You always possess my best wishes, and I hope God will grant you every happiness. Do not absent yourself from the house: my father has little need to be deprived of any of his friends. Do answer this. Address, "Jean Johnston, Post-office, ——," and a servant of ours will call for it on Thursday at noon.'

"This letter was addressed, as usual, to 'Mr. Renton,' and I received it on Thursday, May 11, at eleven in the forenoon."

It tells its own tale as to the writer's character.

Many a woman may see therein her own picture—well meaning, but easily led, misled, and turned, by parents, friends, circumstances; weak, cowardly, underhand; unwilling to give pain, and yet afraid to suffer it; the sort of woman who drives men mad, all the more that she is often only too lovable—perhaps from her very weakness and malleability—a great charm to a lover so long as he fancies his influence is the only one at work. Alas! time alone teaches us that there is nothing so hopeless to guide as the sweet yieldingness which yields to everybody, even as there is no person so difficult to govern as a fool.

Mr. Campbell continues :—

"Far from expecting such a letter, I could hardly credit my senses. Next, I thought it must be a jest, to vex me. I was fortified in this idea by the fanciful way in which Miss J. wished to be addressed as 'Jean Johnston.' It struck me that, if she had anything serious to communicate, she might have commanded my attendance at Birkenshaw, as she had done many times before. After consideration, however, I felt she could never surely jest upon such a subject; and while I decided thus, the answer I wrote will best show the state of my feelings. Miss J. says I wrote harshly. I am very sorry that I should have done so to her or any lady, but at the same time I could not command my feelings, and I had no leisure for reflection, and, even if I had, I was incapable of it.

"'MADAM,— '*May 8th.*

"'I only received your letter this forenoon. The utter confusion of my mind prevented my answering it in time to send by the Post-office, still I hope you will receive it safe. You know little of my feelings when you say simply that your letter will give me pain. No language could describe my feelings. I hope you will forgive if I express myself incoherently. I did not think Miss Jamieson could ever ask me anything that I would not have granted, but I have been fatally deceived. I would sooner part with my existence than give you what you ask, come what will.

"'Two years ago, I paid my addresses to you; these were

rejected. Still you gave me liberty to visit at Birkenshaw. I became resigned to my fate, and continued to do so, although some might not have thought their case hopeless. I would not for the world have intruded upon you, until you yourself began to raise my hopes. You yourself made appointments, and commanded my attendance when and where you thought proper. As far as I know myself, I am not presumptuous or sanguine, but could I receive letters from Miss Jamieson, asking me to meet her solitary in the garden and house of Kinnochar, without indulging hopes? These letters I have this day looked over with a sorrowful heart. You know you allowed many other meetings which you yourself appointed. You spoke freely of the report of our union: it is mentioned in one of your letters. I would have thought it wrong to meet you alone in the garden of Kinnochar, unless I had implicitly believed that our union was to take place. What passed between us on that and other occasions justified that. I leave it to yourself if you did not put questions which were answered by me in a way which could not admit of any other possible interpretation. I am sure you cannot forget what passed on the day I called at Birkenshaw in going to the mills.

"'I will say no more of this. I looked on the promises of Sunday last as a continuation and confirmation of former pledges. Our interview was solitary, solemn, and decisive, and you pointed out the house you wished taken as a residence, and the marriage-jaunt, which was the same as you had different times before mentioned. You wrong me cruelly when you speak of your money: it never at any time entered into my calculations. I am afraid it might bring you more suitors, and on that account alone I was anxious for a renewal of our pledges. I explained to you what prevented my seeing you for some time in spring. Absence in Edinburgh had thrown me back in business, and when I was sent for to Braeside I had to go and return with all speed. I am sorry you make that an excuse for breaking faith with me, as when I came back I was received by you with as much kindness as before. I need not speak of the many and nameless endearments that passed between us: they are all forgotten now. Money has obliterated all.

"'I leave it to your honour and conscience whether, for a year past, either you or I had any other idea than that our marriage was to take place. Sorry would I be to have sought or taken from you a rash vow, because you had come in for a fortune, which I cared nothing about. How I am to bear this sudden, unexpected calamity, God only knows. As to the keeping secret of my first letter, I now care no more for it than I do for anything else in this world.'"

The young man goes on, repeating himself over and over again, in a feeble, dreary sort of

way, harping on her accusation of his pursuit of her for her fortune, which has evidently struck him sharply. Finally, he says, referring to the excuse of her mother's non-consent :—

"I was at all times aware you were capable of acting for yourself. I mean to act honestly and fairly to the last. I cannot give you back your vow, or rather I should say vows. I cannot give you back your letters. The use of those letters must be regulated by circumstances. I fear I cannot refrain from taking steps to justify myself before your parents and the world. Unfit as I am, I must take a copy of this letter before despatching it. Wishing you every happiness, much more than you have left me possessed of, and improvement in your health,

"I am, &c.,

(Signed) "WILLIAM CAMPBELL."

In the letter one traces at once the weak point of the writer—that sensitive egotism, so small in any man, but which many very good men are possessed of, though it leads them on sometimes to the meanest actions, as now. Her lover's half threat of making public his wrongs in his own self-defence, evidently frightens the young lady. She answers him at once :—

"BIRKENSHAW, *9th May.*

"I own the justice and truth of all you have written to me, and now ask your forgiveness. I had no idea of the pain my letter would have given you, but we are quits now. May God forgive you for the harshness of yours. But I will require to take care what I write, as you are a man of law, and I am not fairly matched with you. However, I hope you will answer me by the servant, and tell me whether you will or can forgive me ; and, believe me, I shall endeavour not to hurt your feelings again. I own it was unguarded, and I have no excuse for myself. I have only to say one thing more : if you still wish me to become your bride, I beg that previous to my quitting my father's house all letters that have passed betwixt us may be destroyed. Write me by the bearer. You may address to my father, who is from home, and, as I know your hand, I shall open it.

"ROBINA JAMIESON."

This letter was enclosed in another, as follows :—

"The enclosed was written on Friday, and I sent it into town, with orders that it should only be delivered into your own hands. You were from home. I shall now address it as formerly, and put it in the post-office ; and I request you will answer it, and tell me what you intend with regard to myself. My former request will never be again made, and it would be a relief if I thought you forgave me and forgot it. Address, as before, to 'Jean Johnston, Post-office,' and I will get some one to call for it.

"Robina Jamieson."

Poor foolish girl ! timid, irresolute, deceitful ; afraid to irritate the man in whose power she had put herself, wishing to temporise with him till an opportunity offered of saving herself ; apt at any cajoling self-accusations, not having the strength or honesty to see that, whatever wrong she had done him, a man who could threaten to revenge himself upon a woman for a breach of promise—or, for that matter, a woman on a man ; it is all one—almost justifies the infidelity.

But she gains her end. His next letter (he must have copied it, and what shall be said in defence of a man who copies his love-letters ?) is as follows :—

"My dear Miss Jamieson,—

"I am too happy not to forget and forgive. The trial was severe, but you are an angel still. God Almighty bless you ! My already weakened frame, through this distress, tells me I cannot live without you. You must be my bride. I have continued an evident and honourable attachment to you for years. Make of your fortune what you please, I wish neither control over it, nor the smallest benefit from it, and it will be the happiest moment of my life when I can formally renounce it. I only want Miss J., and she knows I could have begged my bread with her. My anxiety for the delivery of my last induced me to

put a note in the Post-office addressed to you ; the meaning of it will be known to none but yourself.

"I am yours for ever,

"WILLIAM CAMPBELL."

Evidently the man was honest, egotistically inclined, no doubt, and prone to the smallnesses which crop out in all egotists ; but he loved the young woman, and had proved it pretty well.

He goes on in his "Statement" :—

"I considered this a most solemn engagement, confirming former ones ; and the lady herself can only account for her conduct in immediately shunning me, and setting out on a jaunt without ever letting me know, or conferring on me the honour of being her correspondent . . . Miss J. says, in one of her letters, that I have too much honour than to expose her. In this she is correct. I only communicate this statement to her nearest relation. But has she kept her honour with me ? Whatever I feel, I am determined to seek what redress may be in my power. I now say, without vanity, that for a year past, and until she received the letter from her uncle's executor, the attachment was as strong on Miss Jamieson's side as on my own, and I could not have withdrawn with honour to myself, or without her consent. This ends my statement, as sent in to Mr. Jamieson."

Therefore it seems this foolish, frantic lover took the false step of detailing all his wrongs to the lady's father ! Not immediately, however, for he goes on to state how they met, and how everything that had occurred of a disagreeable nature was buried in oblivion :—

"Miss J. said she had made her request only to try me, and laughed at my having taken up the matter seriously. She also wanted a document from me on the subject of our engagement, but said my two letters were sufficient, and bound me irrevocably. She then, voluntarily, took a solemn oath that she would fulfil her engagements with me, and never think of retracting while she drew breath.

"She told me she wished to reside a short time at the house of Kinnochar, which she had newly come to ; and that as soon as

arrangements could be made our union should take place. I was happy once more, and had been so since receiving her last two letters. I could not believe that she would have entered into so many engagements, verbal and written, and then break them ; that, after what had passed between her and me, she would have been so deliberately cruel again and again as to raise my hopes for the purpose of blasting them, or of amusing herself by wantonly sporting with my feelings. . . . I now know that the attendance of others, at least of one other, had become more agreeable to her than mine : circumstances so obvious that they became the subject of general conversation.

"Although she had not, for a year past, roved the smallest distance from home without acquainting me, she now went off to Edinburgh, giving me not the smallest intimation. Afterwards she said she took this jaunt for the benefit of her health. No reason for concealing it from me. Who was more interested in the state of her health than I was? My state of mind at this time admits of no description.

"It was then I wrote out the statement of facts, and sent it to her father in Edinburgh. If anything was wrong in it, I hope I am excusable. It was useless to address *her* on the subject. I therefore sent it to Mr. Jamieson, and it was delivered into his hands by a gentleman, a friend of mine, with the following letter :—

"'DEAR SIR, '*4th June.*

"'It is with sorrow that I feel myself constrained to lay the following before you. There had already been only too much writing on the subject : but it would have been uncandid not to have put you in possession of these facts. As yet no one but Miss J. knows anything. This, however, was not to be for long. That it will distress Miss J. and her relatives I doubt not, but they cannot suffer one-hundredth part of what I am suffering. When you have read the enclosed, will you return it? and lest the parcel should be opened by any one, will you address it in a fictitious name to my care? If I have done anything wrong or strange, it must be imputed to my sufferings. I hope you are enjoying your jaunt ; and with best wishes,

"'I am, dear sir, yours, &c.,

"'WILLIAM CAMPBELL.'"

The foolish fellow ! in that morbid vanity and sensitive self-consciousness which made up a considerable portion of his love, he was weaving the rope to hang himself withal.

He goes on to say,

"After Mr. Jamieson returned from Edinburgh, I met him at the Bruces of Broomfield, where he tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, and wrote in pencil, 'I received your letter and statement. Robina took away the statement. After she had found it correct she *keepit* it.'"

This poor young lady, who did not know her own mind, was apparently growing desperate, for after her return to Kinnochar she thus addresses her persistent wooer :—

"My father received your letter and statement. You have certainly proved what I never denied. I only asked you to release me from that engagement ; but it seems my fortune has too many charms for you, and you are determined to prosecute me, or to have it. I contentedly will submit to anything rather than appear in a court of law ; therefore I have no alternative. But recollect that, at present, I will not leave this house. My parents allow me to decide so far for myself.

"You reproach me for going on a pleasure jaunt without informing you of it. It was for the sake of my health ; and as I am offered frequent sea-excursions, I beg leave to inform you that in a few days I may be off again. That one information may serve for all. I am ordered to go to P—— shortly.

"I understood, when you were last here, you gave me up. You might at least have written to me before writing to my father ; but he does not interfere. If not asking too great a favour you will please inform me what your determinations are : and you will much oblige

"Robina Jamieson."

Into whom, poor lassie, some spirit and firmness seems to have come at last. It is curious to see, by implication, how binding she considers a "promise of marriage," in the letter at least, if not in the spirit. With all her anger and contempt, she never says decisively, "I am free ; I will not marry you." Nor does it seem to enter into the deluded lover's mind how futile, how wicked, is a compulsory engagement. Yet he has some conscience, for he says,

"I must have been over cruel and confused when I sent her the following answer :—

"'DEAR MADAM,— '*11th June.*

"'I am this day favoured with yours of the 9th inst. I will not trouble you with my feelings. I wrote the statement in despair, and it was sent off in a moment. I need not say whether I have repented it or not. I am so overwhelmed ; and the next instant everything seems like a dream. You still speak of your fortune. I cannot say more than I have said already : so far from its having too many charms for me, I would most willingly die that you might be relieved of me ; but that is an event over which I have no control, although I have suffered enough in mind to have broken to pieces a frame possessed of less physical strength. You accuse me of selfishness. I need not make assertions which you will now think matters of course, but if you knew my thoughts I would stand acquitted on that score. My pleasures, when I had any, were all of the simple kind, and could be gratified without a fortune. I have no right to offer better advice than I take myself ; but you will find it is the fortune that makes you despise me—not me who cares for your fortune. I know you can, if you choose, take a very just view of this or any other matter. And I could mention some who worship you now that were once very ready to joke me, and not in the most delicate manner, on the report of our engagement.

"'However, that is nothing. If I could believe I should ever enjoy a moment's peace in this world, I would grant your request, and set you free. But I cannot quite extinguish hope. I know what would ensue, and perhaps cannot entirely prevent this. My affections have been totally exclusive : I never could have cared for any one else under any circumstances. I have thought of no other but yourself for years. And whatever I may have written in my distress, I find it is absolutely out of my power to root out or abate my affection, even though I should be despised and spurned by its object.

"'This being my most pitiful case, what can I do ? You bid me state my determination—at the same time you hold me your own. I am ready to do everything you wish, except giving up my interest in yourself ; in mercy do not ask it again ! I am obliged to act my former self to save appearances. If Captain Wilson' (apparently some supposed rival) 'were away I might submit. I can bear you classing me with misery and contempt, for I believe you are right after all. I never had a high opinion of myself, and I can assure you it is now low enough. If a year ago you had had the same opinion of me as at present, I would have been comparatively happy now. I ask your forgiveness for all I have done amiss. I do not intentionally do wrong, and I am suffering for it all. I have been plunged all at once into

such a sea of misery, and stand in need more of pity than reproach.

"'I intend to be at Mr. Patterson's on Saturday: perhaps you are to be there, and our meeting might be disagreeable to you; if so drop a single word to me. I can safely say I am indisposed, and stop away. If you want anything stated more explicitly I shall be happy to do it. Your letter is very acrimonious, but you shall have no more reproaches from me. I am sorry I cannot consent to break our engagement. Wishing you every improvement in your health,

"'I am, &c.,

"'WILLIAM CAMPBELL.'

"In this letter I have neglected to notice that part of hers which states that she understood I had given her up. She must have misunderstood. I understood the very reverse. I recollect how it was. After some conversation, she asked why I looked so ill? I made no immediate answer. I confess I was a good deal affected, as she was looking very poorly herself. Miss J. then burst into tears, and said she never could forgive herself for lately acting to me as she had done. I did everything in my power to soothe her, saying that all was now happily over: adding, 'I will vindicate you, Miss J., though I cannot vindicate myself for making you suffer so much,' or words to that effect. We were both very much affected; and fearing that her father, or some other person, might enter the room and find us in this situation, we took leave of one another, Miss J. asking me to come back as soon as possible; and said we would be in higher spirits at our next meeting.

"This was the last time I visited her. In two or three days after she set out for Edinburgh with her parents without informing me, though she must have known of it at the time we met.

"Miss J. returned the following answer to my letter of 11th June:—

"'It is necessary to inform you that I am not invited to Mr. Patterson's to-day. I know there are people here who think more of me than they once did, but were I as free as any one this person whom you allude to could never be more to me than a common acquaintance. If my letter was acrimonious, recollect yours to my father was very irritating. But I beg you will address to him no more complaints of me: his health is too feeble to admit of his being agitated by scurrility. Address to myself. I before informed you I am ordered frequent change of air and sea-excursions; so in a few weeks I go to Edinburgh, and afterwards to meet my father at ——, where I trust you will not send threatening letters after me.

"'You offer to grant any request of mine save one: will you return me all the letters I have ever sent you? If so, put them

in the post office that I may get them on Monday morning, and oblige

'ROBINA JAMIESON.

"'P.S.—I never meant to class you with misery and contempt. It was your statement to my father that made me miserable because you remembered me with contempt. But I beg you will not tease my parents with such things, for they will not interfere on your side.'"

Sad it is to see in these letters what appears in the story of many and many a life—the pale ghost, nay, worse, the ugly, decaying corpse of a dead love, once so sweet and fresh, human and fair.

William Campbell answers her brief, bitter letter by another, very long-winded (I ought to say that I have been obliged to condense a good deal, though I have interpolated nothing), in which he explains that through some delay he did not get hers till long after date. He altogether declines to return her letters. He says, "it would be like shutting the tomb upon herself." He promises never to trouble her, or appeal to her parents, but still keeps her bound to her promise of marriage. He regrets again his sending in the statement, but reproaches her for destroying it, and reminds her that he has kept an exact copy of it. He uses no actual threat, but declares that if she at any time breaks her engagement with him, he will "seek redress." Finally, he hopes her health may be benefited by her sea excursions; and ends his letter thus:—

"I would fain say something more, but I shall refrain. I am unwilling to trouble you with complaints, and should wish to suffer in silence. Notwithstanding every exertion I get worse

and worse. No efforts of reason to laugh away my misery have the slightest effect. My health is now suffering much, but I shall seek no remedy. Will I never be allowed to look on you again? In case anything may happen I shall seal and lock up your letters, and leave written instructions as to their delivery to yourself, so you need have no anxiety on that matter. If I could reveal my misery to any person it might give me some relief. I was lately one of the happiest beings in existence, and I am now the most miserable.

"WILLIAM CAMPBELL."

After copying this letter, he again reverts to old things—telling how he was constantly invited to Birkenshaw; how nothing prevented their marriage except slender means; how he used to tell her "he was saving all he could;" and she told him of her possible chance from her uncle, "which," she said, "would make all right." He also relates how, when the first account of the legacy came, all the business matters relating to it were confided to him; and it was not until it turned out to be so much larger than was at first expected, that the plighted troth was attempted to be broken. The "man of law" and the canny Scot peep curiously through the miserable lover, though not so much so as to convict him of mercenariness. Continually he repeats himself, and goes back and back upon every incident of courtship. One he especially records, referring, with true legal exactitude, to a sentence in one of his letters, reminding her of "what passed the day I called at Birkenshaw on my way to the mills."

"I found Miss J. by herself. She complained that I had been jaunting without her. I said it was not on pleasure, but business, and that the weather was very disagreeable. On my rising to go, as I had remained past their dinner-hour, Miss

Jamieson went between me and the door, and said, 'We must repeat our vows.' I answered, 'There was no need, but there could be no objection.' She said, 'Everything was understood as to our marriage; but something ought to be understood as to the time or near about it,' and proposed repeating a solemn oath. I replied, 'I could have no objection, but that it bound us whether our parents consented or not.' She said, 'They are quite agreeable. I told them of our former engagements, and it was just what they expected.'

"She then made me repeat these words: 'May I never know peace in heaven, or see God in mercy, if I marry any other but you, or if I go south again without taking you along with me as my wife!' And she took a similar oath herself."

The next phase in the story is, that the mutual friend at whose house they might have met—Mr. Patterson—calls upon Mr. Campbell to request the return of Miss Jamieson's letters, which is point blank refused. Afterwards Campbell writes to Patterson the following letter:—

"DEAR SIR,— "*29th July.*

"After you called to-day for Miss J.'s letters, which I refused to give up, I became anxious that, in case of any misunderstanding, I should mention again what I communicated to you, and which you may communicate to Miss J.

"I have never done, or intend to do, anything evasive, or in violation of the promise betwixt her and me. I shall be extremely sorry if she has conducted herself, or shall conduct herself, in a manner unbecoming one in her situation with regard to me. But if she does I must candidly state that, in justice to myself, I will if I live take steps for my own vindication. This I have explicitly stated to herself and to her father. I cannot say more; the matter is known to herself and to her parents, and if she, with their consent, violates her engagements with me, it will be known who is to blame. I am not. No person can know the circumstances, or the extent of injury that I have sustained, except myself.

"I hope nothing can diminish the friendship between you and me.

"Yours truly,

"WILLIAM CAMPBELL."

It seems that, somewhat on the principle of "while there is life there is hope," the desperate

lover's last scheme was to keep the girl fast bound, so that, according to the strong Scotch feeling of the sacredness of an oath, if she would not marry himself, she could not marry any other man. Nevertheless, he must have had relentings of both conscience and pity, or else he had apparently heard some news concerning her which strongly affected his already half-bewildered mind; for on the 11th of August in the same year—which has seen so much!—he thus again writes to her:—

"MISS JAMIESON,—

"It is humiliating to me to be under the necessity of addressing you. I beg you will hear me without reference to what is past.

"No person knows the state I am in; nor do I wish it should be known. On Friday last I executed a settlement of the greater part of my small property, and from the state of my mind and health at present the settlement would only stand good in the event of my living sixty days after that date; if I die before that time Robert and my sister will be left unprovided for.

"I am now satisfied that it is your intention to break your engagements with me. I cannot prevail upon myself to consent to this, but as I also cannot prevent you doing what you please, it would be conferring a great favour on me if you would defer marrying another until after the lapse of the sixty days. By that time I will be no more. I now look anxiously forward to the termination of my woes. May it be the commencement of your happiness!"

This is the first indication he gives of that terrible purpose from which sane human nature involuntarily shrinks. Pitiful as it is to think of, it stamps at once the reality of the man's passion for this woman, which had now become an actual monomania. He goes on:—

"In earnestly asking this favour, I do not mean to ask your pity: nor do I in consequence sanction any violation of your

engagements with me. On the contrary, should I be granted strength to support existence—which I do not anticipate—I would seek every redress in my power. A single line from you —unsigned, unaddressed, and without a date—would be satisfactory; and if you wish I pledge myself to return it immediately.

"This must appear strange, and it is so. I cannot help it. If I could make myself otherwise I would. I have struggled hard, but all is unavailing. I see my fate very clearly, and it cannot be avoided. All my endeavour now shall be to reconcile myself to it. Oh, do not do anything to hasten it! not for my sake, but for those who are depending on me, and who have never offended you. I never intended to offend you myself.

"Offer my best respects to your parents. I will never see any of you again, nor the garden, &c. It is better I should not. It would only make me worse; these recollections are so bitter. Will you all pray for me?"

Then, with a curious and ominous confusion of ideas, he ends, "Dear Sir, yours truly, William Campbell;" and puts as a P.S.:—

"May I trouble you for this once to deliver this to Miss Jamieson? To the best of my knowledge there is nothing wrong in it, and she, I have no doubt, will communicate the contents to you if you wish it."

Whether, under all his calmness, the writer had some vague idea that the threat of suicide would be to Miss Jamieson a final compulsion to receive his addresses, one cannot judge. Let us at least not judge him harshly—this poor soul, full of so many good qualities, and that best quality of all, the power of faithful love. A man, of whom a good, loving woman might have made almost anything she pleased, and over whom a good woman of stedfast will, although unloving, might, even while rejecting him, have exercised such an influence as to save him from these deeps of misery, into which one of so frail a nature could not but go down.

Whatever was Campbell's purpose in inditing this letter, it failed. The answer comes from Miss Jamieson's old father,—short and pithy, full of capital common sense, and calmly ignoring everything that to him, honest man, was no doubt perfectly incomprehensible.

"DEAR SIR,— "KINNOCHAR, 13*th August*.

"I have perused your letter to Robina. Its contents surprise me very much indeed. This world is made for trials and disappointments. I thought you was (*sic*) one of those men that to anything of the kind would have cried 'Buff!' on; and I am sure you have more good sense than to let any disappointment ever be known to the world, far less than to let it interfere with your happiness or peace of mind. There is as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Do let us see you here again as before, and believe me,

"Yours truly,

"DAVID JAMIESON."

This is the last letter copied. With it all correspondence and all intercourse between Mr. Campbell and the Jamieson family appear to have ceased. The rest of the MS., which consists of a good many pages, is a feeble, lengthy, and often rather incoherent statement; full of ramblings and repetitions—apparently written at different times, though headed by the sad and ominous words, "The Last."

From this—which is far too long-winded to give entire, I will merely extract sentences here and there, which seem to throw any new light on the events of the story, or on the character of the actors therein. For, as before said, I have no other possible data to go upon than this MS. in the ancient copy-book. In this final statement I shall do as I have done throughout,—merely

extract and excise, without adding a single line.

"A dreadful cloud has hung over me for some time past. I fear much I shall never enjoy the sunshine of this world. This paper will be laid down beside the statement of facts respecting Miss Jamieson. That lady's letters are in John Watson's little black box. I beg that special care may be taken of them and the different papers; they may perhaps be required as a qualification of my conduct, if any such be admitted, for I have suffered, and am suffering, more than I can bear. I have thought, and no doubt most people would think so too, that I was the last man in the world to be borne down by an occasion of this nature, and I might have laughed at any other person under similar circumstances. None can know, however, until they are placed in a similar position. God knows what may happen. I have no distinct views on the subject. My feelings have been wounded in a dreadful degree."

And here he wanders off into the recapitulation of his wrongs:—

"I hope every person will try to think as charitably of me as possible. I will not attempt to justify my past life. I wish it had been very much better than it has been. What I most dreaded was deficiency as a practical Christian and a good man, terms of similar import; and, without taking any merit, I have had ample time for self-examination during nights when sleep has not visited me. I have found myself most lamentably deficient. All my comfort is, that I never oppressed the poor and helpless, nor did a deliberate act of cruelty to man or beast. . . . Although lately deceived where I least expected it, I was not selfish, and had no pleasure in squandering; indeed, I could not quietly do so when I had others depending on me, and I can say as a dying man, that the accusation of Miss J., that I wished to possess myself of her fortune, is as cruel as it is unjust. . . .

"I meant to have mentioned some of my friends by name, but in the agitation of my mind I might forget some of the best of them. But may every happiness attend them through life, and may they never suffer themselves, as I have done, to place their happiness on one object. I meant to have written to my parents, but cannot. I can only think of them with that dreadful degree of agony. . . . I die as I have lived—their dutiful son. It gives me some consolation at this awful juncture to think that I have not been a bad son or brother. My parents, and Robert and Isabella, can speak to that, as they are all good themselves. I feel for poor Robert; he must work away at the business. I hope some will employ him for my sake, and many

for his own. A better young man, or more honourable, or more punctual, does not exist. He is well calculated to do business, much better than I was myself. I hope the brethren of the profession will be kind to him. Isabella I know will feel dreadfully. All this redoubles my agony, and urges me to a speedy termination of my woes. We will all meet in a better world; and I have one consolation—they will not be left destitute here.

"I have endeavoured by every possible means to conceal the dreadful state I am in. In the course of two months, I have not slept many hours. I am a complete wreck and ruin, totally unfit to do business. . . . . Instead of reading my book, as I was wont, I have sought company, and even dissipation. I do not mean that I have ever taken to drinking, but I have left company with regret, knowing I had not now the power of retiring peacefully into myself. Time, which used to fly, now lags and wears me out of patience. I know myself and know that I shall never be better, and what impels me to escape from it all is the fear of absolute insanity, when I would be deprived of the power of extricating myself from this deplorable state of existence."

Psychologists may question whether insanity had not even then begun—whether that exaggerated Ego which marks so often the thin line of demarcation between soundness and unsoundness of mind, had not for some time indicated that the poor brain was growing more or less diseased, and that the awful "escape" contemplated, however rationally and deliberately stated, was in truth only a phase of mental sickness, increased by bodily disease. Though he seems never to have been actually laid aside by illness; to have gone steadily to business, and kept up a decent appearance before the world, and especially before his family—to whom he again and again tenderly refers. But the one engrossing subject is never forgotten for a moment.

"After an interval of suffering, I have taken up my pen again. But I feel no improvement, rather the contrary. . . . My chief

mistake was allowing myself to get on an intimate footing with one who was great, or thought herself so. Miss J. knows what passed between us on that head; how she satisfied my scruples, and urged me on. She seemed to have convinced herself and me that our dispositions were congenial; but I should have been like the Minstrel of Donne,

> 'Who prayed the great lady to be allowed
> To hirple his woes to the coal-house door,
> And cheer with his lays the simple and poor.'

The poor old man's feelings somewhat resemble my own. . . ."

He then refers to his threat of instituting law proceedings, but declares it was only a threat; which he never would have carried out, and once more entreats pardon for it.

"Nothing has sickened my soul so much as Miss Jamieson's accusation of my having designs on her fortune. God knows, if I had all the wealth in the world, I would give it all that I might be myself again, or even for one sound sleep. Reason and philosophy may say, 'Have you not still the objects which used to delight you—the society of friends and acquaintances, books, &c.?' But they are not the same to me; I see things through a totally different medium. My mind, which once reflected all things in such a pleasing manner to me, is now broken and ruffled, and reflects everything distorted, hideous, and disgusting. . . . It is officious memory that puts me to the rack, and yet without it I would be a second *Edward Shore* (he here doubtless refers to Crabbe's pathetic poem of this title), and on a par with the beasts that perish. Beyond everything I fear falling into that state. I do already find my faculties considerably impaired, and still getting worse. There is no remedy against this calamity but one, and may God forgive one of His erring creatures for presuming to have recourse to it!"

Poor unfortunate! One's heart bleeds as one copies his words, for the instance is not a rare one in this miserable, struggling, over-worked, over-sensitive world of men. It holds out a solemn warning to both men and women, to strive, from earliest childhood, after that grand quality, the balance-weight and pivot upon which

our whole mental and moral machinery turns—*self-control.*

On and on, page after page, does William Campbell continue repeating himself, and going over his dreary story; referring to incidents upon which "delicacy," he says, had hitherto made him silent—how the lady, in the spring of the previous year, "in the house of Kinnochar, voluntarily and unequivocally declared her attachment;" of their many talks as to their future life, their home, and even their possible new felicities therein: "and she used to speak with pleasure of my fondness for children." He reverts sometimes to "the gentleman"—he never mentions his name—to whom apparently Miss Jamieson is shortly to be married; with whom, he says, she appeared at the theatre the day after the receipt of that last letter imploring her to defer the wedding for at least sixty days, and who is constantly seen accompanying her through the town. This gentleman, however, he allows to possess many more attractions than himself; nor does he accuse him in any way, except by suggesting that he had been a mere common acquaintance until Miss Jamieson was publicly known to have succeeded to this fortune. The poor fellow's innate kindness of heart comes out in many ways:—

"In my settlement I have burthened my sister and brother with no legacies. We have poor friends of our own, and they will not forget those who have been in the habit of getting some little assistance. I have only to give the hint, and I am sure it will be obeyed. I would wish them to pay ten pounds to the Kirk Session, for the poor of our parish; ten pounds to the kirk treasurer, to be given in charity as he shall think proper: five

pounds to George Black, and one pound each to John Ferguson, Alexander Graham, and Mary Lochead ; and one pound to an old man, nearly blind, who often sits on the kirkyard brae."

His great anxiety appears to have been to prove clearly that, in spite of the dreadful act he meditated, his mind was perfectly sound, so that in no way should the disposition of his property be called into question, to the injury of his family. He seems indeed to have been a man tolerably well off in the world, for he more than once reverts to his comfortable circumstances, as well as to the good health which he had invariably enjoyed until this calamity overcame him. Nor has he apparently succumbed without a struggle. He says he at one time intended to cure his despair by travelling, but was convinced of the hopelessness of this: wherever he is, or whatever he does, the one dominant idea never leaves him for a moment. But he is still capable of a good deal of curious abstracted moralising :—

"What a difference there is in the fates and fortunes of different men. I envy some whom others pity. I wish it had been my fate to die like Marshal Ney, and yet many thought him cruelly treated. What a glorious doom compared to mine, to get a few brave fellows to shower their bullets through his heart, particularly in his case, when they would only obey his own orders. I, God forgive me, am constrained to do what till now would never have had a place in my mind, and to do it myself."

This is the only clue given of the manner in which he intended to seek death, except that it is to take place in some quiet lonely place where he wishes afterwards to be buried—possibly on

that same "kirk-yard brae" where the "old man nearly blind" often sits. He also says,—

"When in Edinburgh, Mr. John Graham, of that city, Mr. George Morison, of this place, and myself, agreed to attend each other's funerals, at whatever distance apart we might reside. I wish Mr. Graham accordingly invited; Mr. Morison will, of course, be there. I wish that especially, as Mr. Graham repeated this the last time I saw him, and we made promises which I should not like broken. I never did break my promises. None will be more astonished than he at my fate."

This fate seems now darkening over him, nearer and blacker. He becomes every page more vague, wandering, and incoherent in what he writes; he makes confusions of proper names, and repeats himself again and again. Whether the MS. was continued for weeks or days before he could make up his mind to the fatal end, one cannot say. The last blow which unhinged him seems to have come from the fact of his discovery how Miss Jamieson, now busy about the preparations for her marriage, was "making light of and laughing at the whole matter."

"I have also from the best authority that she has spread it abroad, and mentioned circumstances which have now become public. There is no doubt she has shown and published my last letter, for Miss Allan mentioned the particulars of it to a lady in this town. Well, she has succeeded in bringing about what she wished; she is at full liberty to laugh at me. Bad as the world is, I suppose few after all would envy her her sport. It is not always the extent of the wrong, but the thought by whom it is inflicted, that plants the sting. When Cæsar saw Brutus stab at him, he offered no resistance: his heart burst, and muffling up his face in his mantle, he fell at the base of Pompey's statue.

"All is now over. I die in perfect good will to every human being. If my feelings have led me to say anything offensive respecting Miss Jamieson, I am very sorry for it. She has my entire forgiveness. If I have erred, I hope she will forgive me, and it will be wise in her to forget whatever may have passed between us. If I could have done this, I should have been happy."

Here the MS. abruptly ends,—the story likewise: to which I can give no definite conclusion, for I find none. How, when, or in what manner the scene closed upon the unfortunate man I have no idea. The only other fact attainable concerning him is that he died.

For, in the last page of this yellow old copy-book is an inscription which purports to be "copied from the tombstone of the late William Campbell, Esq., Writer, of ——, in the churchyard of ——," the very one he indicates as belonging to the kirk of his parish. The inscription runs thus:—

"To the memory of William Campbell, Esquire, Writer, who died 29th September, 18—" (it is the year of the date of the MS.), "in the thirty-eighth year of his age. This monument is erected "——

But no: I will not give the inscription, as it might furnish some remote clue to an identification which throughout this true story I have carefully avoided. For while the narration of so sad a tragedy of common life, hidden under the safe shelter of the anonymous, can harm no one, and may be a lesson to some, the individuality of its unhappy subject is of no moment to any human being.

Suffice it to say that this monument purports to be erected to his memory by the friends who loved and lamented him, and that, besides the record of his death—usually all that is found in Scotch churchyards—it pays a long and affectionate tribute to his worth: lingering upon his several virtues—his justice, charity, and benevo-

lence, his firm, independent principles, and his social yet simple manners. Of his mode of death is recorded not a word—merely that "he died."

This is all. Concerning the lady whom I have called Robina Jamieson, and her after history, I can tell nothing, for nothing do I know. Most probably she too is long since dead, for her lover records of her then that "Miss J. was not so young as to be unable to judge and act for herself." It is difficult, nay impossible, to speculate as to the effect produced upon her life or character by the events of this short six months—between May and October. Perhaps they would have no effect at all. Most likely she would go on from maidenhood to wifehood, and from youth to old age, very respectable and respected: an exceedingly agreeable person, cherishing under her regular decorous church-going the sort of thing she called a conscience, and preserving safe under the matronly folds of her silken bodice that queer piece of anatomy which she supposed to be a heart.

But, God help us! hearts are living things, and even in this generation people are unfortunate enough to possess them sometimes. Let us teach our daughters to guard their own; to keep them pure and clean, unselfish, unworldly, honest, and true; so that neither their loving or not loving him can ever injure any man. For, strange as it may seem, in our own as in most other conditions of society, from barbarism upwards, it is not so much the men who rule the women, as

the women who guide the men. And when the life of a man, not absolutely a bad man, goes to wrack and ruin, it is not seldom some woman who, by sins of omission or commission, has been originally to blame.

A GARDEN PARTY.

WE were all tormenting Aunt Patience to tell us a Christmas story.

Aunt Patience — everybody's Aunt Patience, though she has not a relative living—is rather different from her name; being, I own, a somewhat quick-tempered little woman. That is, when you irritate her, or go against her sense of right and justice; but, these satisfied, she is a most pleasant person. Slightly deformed —not naturally, but from a weak spine neglected in childhood: and with the pathetically beautiful face that deformed people often have—a sort of mute appeal to Providence, or to the tenderness that Providence puts into good people's hearts. She has also a quantity of light brown hair—very pretty—and unmingled with a thread of grey, though she is long past forty. She possesses a small income, and a small house of her own, to which she retires, when not wanted, as continually she is, in other people's. Then she leaves it in charge of the cat and the servant; or "lets" it, as she says, though usually to poor

friends who can pay no rent, or sick friends, to whom its prettiness and peace are beyond all paying for.

Miss Patience Hall was never married. Whether she was ever "attached," as the phrase is, to anybody—But that is her own affair. She says she has the happiest life imaginable; and one can believe it, for she takes no trouble to make herself happy, only her neighbours.

"My dears," said Aunt Patience, crossing her little knees comfortably, and composing herself to knit away by the fire-light, "what story can I possibly tell you? You have drained me dry long ago. If I had to write a book" (here we shouted with laughter at the comicality of the idea), "I could not find anything in the world worth saying—as is indeed the case with many voluminous authors. But" (as if she thought she had been a little too severe), "probably the reason is, that they go out of their way to invent things out of their own tired heads, or steal them second-hand from other people's; when, if they would just set down what they saw, thought, and felt—within the limitations of proper reserve—it would be far more interesting, and more original, because more natural.

"No; I'll not attempt to tell you a story. I will simply give you the history of an afternoon, spent in a family where I was visiting. It may be none the less satisfactory, on this cold, wet, wintry day, that it was a summer afternoon.

"The house was Oak Hill—Mr. Holcomb's. Possibly none of you know Mr. Holcomb; few

do out of his own immediate neighbourhood. But he is a remarkable man in his way. A tradesman—I am sure he would not object to the title ; wealthy, and all his wealth of his own earning ; a self-made, self-educated man. Whatever he owes to his antecedents—and he may owe something, for I believe in the value of race, and that when a notable man crops out in a generation, it indicates something fine in the breed—I cannot tell ; I never saw his father or mother. But I know what he owes to himself, and what his children will owe to him. Primarily, a worthy mother, whom he married early in life, and who, he says, has helped to make him everything that he is,—which is easily credible when you know her.

" Once upon a time Mr. Holcomb stood behind his own counter. It is possible he may still stand there occasionally, though I should think that the guidance and management of the enormous establishment into which his 'shop' has grown, gave him much more useful work to do. But whether or no, wherever he stands, and whatever he is, you will always find him a gentleman.

" It is very pleasant staying at Oak Hill. The house is large and handsome, but its splendours are toned down by good taste, and refinement has kept pace with increasing luxury. One of the great difficulties of your self-made men, is to get accustomed to their wealth ; to know how to use it levelly, and gradually and gracefully to advance with it. Otherwise the good old-fashioned hob-nailed boot is perpetually peeping out from

under the purple garments, and ill-natured people who know not how difficult it is to prevent this, laugh at them for it. But nobody will ever laugh at Mr. Holcomb.

"Another pleasure in his house is its artistic treasures. He is one of the few picture-buyers who really know what a good picture is, and judge it for itself, irrespective of the reputation of the painter. Consequently, he has many in his house which are increasing in value year by year, and may pride himself—though he never does—of having been oftentimes the first discoverer of rising genius. He never buys sham 'old masters,' but he has a few good copies of known pictures. While you take your tea in his beautiful drawing-room, or drawing-rooms—there are three *en suite*—you may feast your eyes on the Madonna della Seggiola, Murillo's Virgin of the Louvre, and others:—which is rather agreeable than not.

"Though the house has been modernised into all sorts of comfort and elegance, the garden, a rarely beautiful one, has been wisely left in its primitive old-fashionedness. It has all sorts of delicious nooks, shut in and shut out by queer little hedges: a Dutch flower-garden, sheltered and sunny; two kitchen gardens, where the vegetables grow almost as picturesquely as flowers; a fruit-garden, upon whose walls, at this time, peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, were hanging in the most luscious plenty. Lastly, there is a huge conservatory, where the oranges and lemons of half a century's growth show their perpetual

marvel of fruits and flowers at once, and the fuchsias and camellias are almost the size of trees. But the triumph of the place is an avenue of limes, the finest I ever saw.

"There is something to me strangely touching in a fine avenue of trees, formed, not by chance, but design, and in faith and unselfishness, since those whose long-dead hands planted it can never have hoped to see it full-grown. They who planted this one must have done it to be the joy of generations—as it is. In every season of the year it is beautiful. I have watched it from the dining-room window on a winter's morning, when its every branch and twig, sharply defined and white with snow, turned rose-colour in the sunrise, and became like gigantic arches of coral; and looking through it this August afternoon, before a leaf had begun to fall, with its long, lofty, regular lines, perfect as those of a cathedral aisle, but lightened up with a constant rippling and flickering of light and shadow, out of the glorious irregularities and delicious varieties of nature;—it was a sight to make one's heart not only happy, but thankful.

"'How glad I am it is a fine day! The Drones will so enjoy it.'

"Until Patty Holcomb spoke, I had quite forgotten that this day there was to be a sort of garden party, mysteriously referred to in the family—which is a rather jocular and 'funny' family—as 'the Drones coming.' But who the Drones were I had never troubled myself to inquire; until, seeing that the household—the

children especially—seemed a good deal to anticipate the visit, and that there were various domestic preparations afoot with regard to it, I put the direct question, 'Who were the Drones, and what was to be done with them?'

"'Didn't you know? Oh, I'll tell you all in a minute.' But ere she could do so, a sudden outcry in the nursery overhead sent Patty off like a shot.

"She is a nice good girl, Patty—Miss Holcomb, rather, as she is the eldest of the family. I have seen her grow up, and she has grown up to my mind. When she was still in short sleeves and pinafores she was 'our eldest'—a kind of little mother to all the rest. Now, though she is Miss Holcomb, fully come out, and at an age when young ladies usually think a good deal of themselves, she hardly thinks of herself at all; neither of her prettiness, which is not inconsiderable; nor of her cleverness, which is decidedly above the average. She does think about something, I presume, for she speaks little enough, being very reserved for her time of life. I hope some estimable young man will unearth her some day; dig her up out of her shyness—woo her and win her—and she will be well worth winning. Only, I warn him, it may be up-hill work, for Miss Patty is likely to be exceedingly hard to please.

"When she returned, having settled the nursery wrongs and woes, I extracted from her the mysteries of the Drones.

"They were a family bearing that odd surname—a great misnomer, they being the most indus-

trious race possible. More than one generation of them had been in Mr. Holcomb's employ; the present one, consisting of three brothers and one or two cousins, having first come under his eye as roly-poly lads in his Sunday class, when he was himself still a young man. One by one they have entered his establishment as porters, clerks, and so on, being promoted according to their capabilities, and watched over with a sort of feudal care, which they have rewarded by an equally feudal devotedness. They have turned out, every one of them, the most faithful servants that any master could desire, and it has been an immemorial custom to invite them to an occasional holiday—they and all their belongings—at Oak Hill.

"Whatever Mr. Holcomb does, he never does by halves. This year the Drone family and their excrescences numbered about thirty souls—some of them very small souls indeed—as all the young mothers were blessed with numerous babies; and among the fathers was an invalid, whom, Patty told me, her papa had long been anxious over, and who, if he died, would leave a blank in the establishment not easily filled up. So, to get him, the mothers, and babies safely conveyed, Mr. Holcomb had chartered an omnibus, which was to call at each house successively, take up each party, and bring them in comfort through the eight miles of hot, dusty roads which lay between their town dwellings and pleasant, rural Oak Hill. That they might see it in its utmost pleasantness, on that one summer holiday

—probably their only holiday in the year—had been a source of great anxiety to everybody, until this morning, when Tom Holcomb, after carefully studying the barometer, declared, with the calm conviction of seventeen upon every subject on earth, that 'it was sure to be a jolly fine day.'

"Young Tom is rather an ally of mine, for I see him less as what he is now, than as what he is capable of being. Not that I think he will ever be such a man as his father; it would be foolish to expect it, he being cast in a totally different mould. He is very fond of his 'dad'—as, in strictly private life, he still affectionately calls him—but he looks down upon him from his sturdy five feet eleven, and patronises him rather, with a tender respect that is funny, although pretty, to see. Tom is the very opposite of his father in many things: turns a decidedly cold eye upon literature and art, but loves horses and dogs with all his soul. To see him handling the 'ribbons' behind his favourite mare, or running races with his big Newfoundland, who adores him, is quite a picture. He looks so thoroughly, boyishly happy, so gloriously ignorant of all the sins and sorrows of this world. May he long continue so!

"I like Tom. He is rough and ready; a little too rough, perhaps, but he is frank and honest, and has the kindest heart in the world. About noon of this day, hours before his customary reappearance—he goes to business with his father—I found him under the lime-tree avenue,

busy unpacking two huge hampers — one of apples, the other of toys—which were intently watched by his youngest sister, aged four, who always follows the big fellow about everywhere, and condescendingly addresses him as 'dear.'

"'Who are these for, Tom?' said I.

"'Don't you know? For the Drones, of course. Our apples all failed this year, so I brought a lot from the market. But don't you tell; they wouldn't care for them unless they thought they were from our trees. And look at these dolls; aren't they pretty? I went to at least a dozen shops before I could get them. Dolls for the girls, and balls for the boys—such a lot! Hollo!' (to the gardener, who was passing by) 'did you mow that bit of the paddock smooth for cricket? Some of the young men play cricket very well, Miss Patience. Will you come and score for us?'

"I promised, and then having again claimed my admiration for his dolls, Tom carefully packed the hamper up again, arranged them for distribution under a large lime-tree, shouldered his little sister, and walked away.

"Mrs. Holcomb and Patty had been invisible since breakfast, and both looked rather tired at our mid-day dinner, which was a little more hurried than usual. But afterwards, when I sat reading in the drawing-room, they reappeared, carefully dressed in demi-toilette. Miss Holcomb looked as nice as neatness and youthful bloom could make her, in a fresh muslin dress, and her mother wore a handsome silk, and a

cap of the most exquisite point lace, which I could not help admiring.

"'I put it on on purpose,' said she, half-apologetically. 'I thought it would please the Drones if I dressed well to receive them.'—(N.B. I had not intended doing it, but of course I went immediately and put on my best gown for the visitors.)

"This done, I buried myself once more in my book, which was very interesting. I remember —if only for the strong contrast it made between court life and the life of these working people, our guests,—what book it was,—that strangely touching Royal idyll, the simple, sad love story, which this year has made England take its Queen to its heart as if she were a peasant woman. I was near crying over it, and had forgotten all about the garden party, when I heard wheels drawing up to the front door, and one of the little ones calling out, 'Miss Patience! Miss Patience! mamma says, would you like to come and meet the Drones?'

"Of course I went. At the entrance-hall stood Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb, Patty, Tom, the governess, and all the younger children, watching the unloading of a large omnibus, full inside and out—as full as ever it could hold. Of such very respectable-looking people too; the young men dressed so well, and as for the women and children, they were all as neat as new pins. Tom made himself ubiquitous in his attentions, helping everybody down, and snatching more than one bewildered infant from under the

horses' feet. Patty, the governess, and I, also did our best, for there seemed not half enough mothers for the quantity of children.

"'Are you all here?' said Mr. Holcomb, after he and his wife had shaken hands with the whole party, appearing in the most miraculous manner to distinguish one from another, and to recollect which children belonged to which, who were married and who single,—facts, that to the end of the day, I altogether failed in acquiring. 'Are you quite sure you have left nobody behind?'

"Here some one admitted, with a smile, that one child had actually been nearly left behind—a poor little thing, whom nobody missed, until, at the street's end, they saw a crowd gathered round it, wondering whose child it was. So they drove back and picked it up again. A very slight catastrophe, as it turned out, and the only one. The whole party, in their best clothes and highest spirits—in spite of a slight shyness on first arriving at their master's splendid home—were evidently bent on enjoying themselves.

"And their master seemed determined to make them do so. 'We'll go through the garden first,' said he; as taking two little girls by the hands, and addressing them by their Christian names (which, I remember, were Florence and Blanche, or Ethel and Edith—something very grand), he led the way, followed by the whole party—young men and maidens, fathers, mothers, and children, many of them babies in arms: quite a procession indeed. We

fell into it ; every one of us who could, carrying or leading a child, for, in truth, the young generation seemed legion. I seized upon one sweet-faced little creature, with a grave, old-fashioned look, but so very tiny that I had no idea it had passed the baby age, or was above being talked to in baby language, until, on my alluring it with a bunch of late red currants, it shook its head with a solemnity worthy Lord Burleigh, saying, in the best of English, 'No! I don't like 'em.'

"I must here notice one thing, that in all our promenades, through gardens and green-houses, pleasure-grounds and lawns, not one of the children offered to touch a fruit or a flower, or even asked for it. Some of them—the little atom in my arms especially—cast longing eyes on the posies, and, on receiving one, would clutch it eagerly, all a-smile with delight, but nothing more. Better mannered children could not be, in any rank of life—ay, even at the final test, the distribution of dolls and balls. This duty was performed by Mr. Holcomb himself, with a justice and judgment highly creditable to him, considering the difficulty of distinguishing among the small people which were boys and which were girls, and the strong illegal proclivities which some of the former seemed to have for dolls instead of balls.

"At last, the gifts being all disposed of, and supplemented by as many apples as could be stowed away, the host and hostess wisely left their guests to amuse themselves, as was not

difficult in this large, lovely garden, on this exquisite August day. They subdivided ; one group took to croquet, under the superintendence of the young ladies and their governess ; a few strolled about in couples—of course, there were more than one pair of 'cousins' who took a special interest in one another ; and several young mothers devoted themselves, singly or socially, to their endless babies. Out of the men were picked a 'jolly' set for cricket, headed by a young fellow who had brought his bat with him and with whom I had held some enthusiastic conversation on that fine old English game, where all classes meet on the noble equality of thews and sinews, skill and good-humour; where the young blacksmith may bowl out the young squire, and the farmer owe a grand series of runs to his own ploughman, with equal benefit to both.

"I have played cricket—I play no more ; but, thank the Fates, I still can score. So I sat in great content, and really admiring the zealous activity with which these under-sized town-bred young fellows carried on their game. It was not like a village match, certainly ; but it was very respectably played. Two of the players, whenever they got in, never seemed to get out, and scored such a lot of runs, and so fast, that it needed all my attention to keep count. At length both these heroes became so exhausted, that in the intervals of business they threw themselves down on the grass to recover breath. Just then fortunately came a summons to tea,

and the whole party, including Tom (I observed that Master Tom, who is a first-rate cricketer, had modestly retired into almost permanent 'long-stop'), resumed coats and waistcoats, and blossomed back into young gentlemen. For 'the gentlemen' and 'the ladies' were words most carefully made use of both by Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb and the rest of the party; and not a single member of it did discredit to the title.

"What a pretty sight it was, that tea-table! round which were gradually ranged the elders and youngsters. It was set right in the middle of the avenue, and the light and shadow of the green leaves flickered on its white damask cloth and its pretty china—the good china, no 'kitchen set'—behind which Mrs. Holcomb and I had agreed to preside, leaving to Patty's care the milk-jugs, for the children. Between the two trays, set at each end, extended a wide Debateable Land, plenteous with comestibles; and I own I dreaded the immediate forays that little hands might make into it. But no! not a finger was put forth until Mr. Holcomb had said grace; and then it was only one very small shy voice which whispered to me entreatingly, 'P'ease, me do want a tate.' (It was against the law, but—he got it.)

"I despair of ever describing that tea-drinking—how my arm literally ached with holding the tea-pot, and how, 'Another cup, ma'am, please, for a lady,' became words of alarming import—for where was it to come from? Since the

infant battalion, which we had thought was safely consigned to Patty and milk-and-water, had much preferred tea, and came upon us in a body, draining us down to nearly *aqua pura*. And amidst our Herculean labours, we required Argus eyes to prevent china being dropped out of sticky little fingers, and to take out of mouths crammed to choking, dangerous fragments of very soppy cake. What matter? the same things happen at the most aristocratic nursery-tables. And when, his heart and lips being opened by contented satiety, my right-hand neighbour, of about seven, directed my attention to his 'new weskit,' which he said 'mother' had just made, and a friend on my left, who could not yet speak plain, was equally anxious I should admire her 'straw *rat* and ribbins,' and even her red boots, I was as much entertained as I have often been by the politest and most talented company.

"When almost nothing was left to rise from, the company rose, and being again left to amuse themselves, dispersed in various directions. Mr. Holcomb and I stood watching the sunset, which was specially grand,—and the cricketers, who seemed determined to waste not a minute of daylight and fresh air. He tried to explain to me the perplexed consanguinities of the Drone family, and told me little anecdotes of them all, from their youth upwards, showing me various specimens of the rising generation, who were 'the very image of their father when he first came to my class.' On their part, several

of the cricketers came up lingeringly to their master's side, to tell him how the game was going on, and to remind him of various other holidays in old times—'just such a day as this, sir, if you remember.' All of them seemed to hover about him with an affectionate pleasure, as if they liked his company, and were accustomed to be talked to by him on other matters than business. Yet, unrestrained and free as they were, at any moment Mr. Holcomb's least word was instantaneously obeyed. I liked also the way they behaved to Tom and Tom to them, though he was at a difficult age and in a difficult position in the business—having, necessarily, to begin it at the very beginning. Some of the men carefully addressed him as 'Mr. Thomas' and 'sir,' but others unhesitatingly called him 'Tom.' Both names the young gentleman took quite easily; indeed, throughout the day Tom Holcomb devoted himself entirely to making the visitors 'jolly,' as he called it, and never thought about himself or his dignity at all—which is a great deal to say for a lad of seventeen.

"But the sun sank lower, the grass round the cricketers began to be damp with August dews, and the little group of mothers sitting on chairs under the avenue drew their shawls closer over their babies' heads.

"'Come now,' said Mr. Holcomb, 'before we go in to supper, let us have some music—open-air music. A hymn, perhaps, to begin with?'

"The master and most of his people belonged

to a Nonconformist body, and, with every respect for their theology, I own I had my doubts as to their music. These doubts, however, were soon dispelled, as they sang the Russian National Hymn, very well arranged in four parts, and then an anthem—'How beautiful upon the Mountains'—given in a manner that would not have discredited a cathedral choir. Lastly, on Mr. Holcomb's suggesting 'something secular,' we had 'All among the Barley,' and another glee, conducted and sung with a crispness, accuracy, and firmness of tone, such as all part-singers know to be not easily attainable. As we stood in a circle, vocalists and audience, the lime-leaves overhead seemed to dance to the music, and the full moon, creeping over the shoulder of the house, broadened her round face into additional jollity as she looked at us. It was a pretty sight—a sweeter sound; but the lawn glistened like a sheet of water in the moonlight, and Mrs. Holcomb's maternal anxiety over 'all those babies' was quite irrepressible, so we hurried in-doors.

"To the school-room? the servants' hall? or even the denuded and re-arranged dining-room? Not at all; but to the three splendid drawing-rooms—adorned just as they would have been for a company of Mr. Holcomb's rich neighbours, who could requite him feast for feast. How pretty the suite of rooms looked!—gleaming with lights, perfumed with flowers, bright with amber satin damask (all uncovered): everything lovely or curious being repeated in the

tall mirrors that reached from floor to ceiling, and reflected not only the pictures, but the people—these unwonted guests, who came treading softly over the rich carpets, and looking all around them with wide, admiring, wondering eyes.

"Some people might say this was a mistake: that they would have been happier in the kitchen or the servants' hall. I do not think so. I think Mr. Holcomb was quite right—that these poor working men and women were not harmed, but benefited, by being led, for one night, into such a fairy paradise; shown Canova's white nymphs and Raffaelle's Madonnas—ay, even bright mirrors and amber satin curtains. For our neighbours' splendours injure us not one bit, when we can enjoy them without envying them. And I believe these good people envied not a single luxury of the many with which their master had surrounded himself—which he has worked so hard for, and re-distributes, whenever he can, with such a liberal heart and hand.

"So, by-and-by, the company settled down, ranging themselves round the room, as at an ordinary evening party, and Miss Holcomb began the entertainment by opening the piano and playing a little. Various other music followed from the visitors—'Hail, smiling Morn,' in particular, being sung so well, that it was unanimously encored. Some of the children dropped off to sleep, and were assisted away and made comfortable in quiet sofa-corners;

but the greatest number kept wide awake, and sat in groups on the floor, listening intently, and altogether 'as good as gold.' One baby, of about a year old, lay on its back in the centre of the room, crowing and beating its little feet on the carpet in a perfect ecstacy of enjoyment.

"In the midst of all this youth, and life, and merry-making, was one shadow, which all felt and nobody spoke of—the invalid whom I have named. He was a young man, with a wife and two children—they sat together on the most comfortable sofa that could be found—and his face told in a moment its sad tale. White and wasted, the skin drawn tightly over the cheek-bones, the sunken eyes gleaming, and the voice having that peculiar hollowness by which one recognises the last stage of consumption, he was a sad sight—that is, he would have been, but for his own exceeding cheerfulness. He had insisted on coming with the rest, and doing all they did, so far as he was able; and when, during the day, his little child was brought to Mrs. Holcomb's maternal doctoring with some small ailment, nothing could exceed the father's care and anxiety over her. Now, he sat with her on his lap, petting and cheering her with a self-forgetful tenderness. Would the little girl afterwards remember it? She was quite old enough to do so. For the wife, she sat beside them both, and divided her attention between them, a younger baby in her arms being luckily fast asleep.

"Was she aware, poor woman, of the fear,

the almost certainty, which—as everybody else could see—hung over her?—the doubt whether her husband would ever live to see another holiday at Oak Hill. Of course, nobody hinted this, but I think everybody felt it; and it threw a strange solemnity over us all. In one sense, this was nothing new or remarkable. Do we, any of us, know when our time will come? Do we not continually walk on day by day in ignorance beside those whom suddenly we miss from our side?—God has lifted them from us, and made the every-day men and women whom we knew into His dead—that exceeding great army of whom we know nothing, save that they are His, and with Him. But to sit beside a person who may—nay, must—within a certain number of days and weeks, have departed from this world, have learned the great mystery, and become wiser than us all—is a different thing. Continually, in the midst of the singing, that young man's face—so death-like, yet so living in its enjoyment, and so full of peace and cheerfulness—struck me with a feeling of great awe. Did he know or guess the truth about himself? Yes, he must have known. Presently, I was convinced he did know.

"There came a pause in the singing, and Mr. Holcomb proposed that, as supper time was near, we should end our music with the Evening Hymn—'Glory to Thee, my God, this night.' Immediately the clatter of talking ceased: there fell a reverent stillness over the room; and then Mr. Holcomb gave out, two lines at a time,

in Nonconformist fashion, the sweet old hymn. We sang it—not, I must confess, to the severe classic, ancient version that one hears in churches now, but to the corrupted one of mediæval and Methodist times—the lively tune of half a century ago, which has such a peculiar charm, because one learnt to sing it almost as soon as one could speak. As we sang the lines—

> "Teach me to live that I may dread
> The grave as little as my bed,"

I stole a glance at the young man beside me. His whole expression had altered. Yes, he knew. I was sure of that. He was moving his wan lips to the words; being too weak to sing now; his eyes had a strange far-away look; and his face, bent over the curly head of his little girl, who had fallen asleep on his bosom, was grave and quiet. He held the little thing carefully and tenderly; but his mind seemed wandering far away. Was he thinking of how soon he might sleep 'another sleep than ours?' I cannot tell; but whatever his thoughts were, there was no fear in them: his countenance was as peaceful as his own child's.

"The hymn over, Mr. Holcomb—in the simple and natural, yet deeply earnest habit he has of bringing his religion into daily life, without ever putting it intrusively or controversially forward, said, 'Let us read a verse or two out of the Psalms, and end with a few words of prayer.'

"Now there is a way in which the mingling of sacred and secular things may be made utterly

jarring, obnoxious, and profane :— there is another way in which they can be so harmonised as to blend them into one, as it was meant they should be blended—causing us to feel that 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' It did not strike me as in any sense painful or unfitting to hear through those lighted drawing-rooms the familiar words, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,'—read on to the end of the psalm. As for the sick man, while he listened, which he did intently, his look became not merely peaceful but rapturous —as if he already walked in those 'green pastures,' and saw the *other side* of that valley of the shadow of death, into which he was fast going. He may have crossed it already, or have to cross it ere long—I know not; but I believe unquestionably that the rod and the staff which David speaks of, will not have failed him : he will have been 'comforted.'

"The 'few words of prayer'—only a few words, suitably and simply said by an aged minister who was present—being ended, we all rose, and stood in groups, rather silent, and wet-eyed, some of us.

"'Now,' said Mr. Holcomb, cheerfully, 'I am sure we must all be getting very hungry. Will you take a lady in to supper?'

"This remark was addressed to a gentleman, the only stranger present, who happened to be a terrible old Tory, with a keen sense of the distinctions of classes. Certainly, such a position had never occurred to him before, and I won-

dered a little what he would do. He was taken aback for a moment, I think, and then, being a gentleman, he did the only right and possible thing for a gentleman to do—he offered his arm to his next neighbour, and escorted her politely to the supper-table.

"What a supper-table it was! extending the whole length of the dining-room, laden not only with that 'good big piece of beef,'—which I overheard Tom advising his mother to provide,—but with viands of all sorts: ham, lobsters, chicken-pie, fruit-pie, jellies, tarts, creams; the centre being adorned with a dessert fit for any dinner-party. Now, I don't believe in eating and drinking as a means of festivity: I think most people eat and drink a great deal too much; but if I ever did give a feast, it should be such an one as this of Mrs. Holcomb's. When she sat down at the head of her well-filled elegant table, and saw round it those happy-looking guests—guests who could not give her a supper back again—I think she must have felt happy too. She looked so.

"It was severe work for her though, and for us all. Tom became Briarean in his usefulness, and did the work of three waiters at once. So did the younger children; so did the active, kindly governess. Patty, who has a perfect genius for infantile government, arranged all the small fry who could be separated from their mothers, or who were not already fast asleep in different corners, on one large sofa; where she settled them down like a nest of young sparrows,

and fed them by turns with any good thing that came to hand, with which they could injure neither themselves nor their neighbours. But though it was not long past eight, and they had only finished tea at six, their appetites were appalling. I thought to myself, what hard work it must be to fill those little mouths with any sort of food! Neatly dressed and comfortable looking as all these families were, life must be to them, at the best of times, a perpetual struggle.

"But no such thoughts seemed to trouble the young people—for they were all young, though most of them were married, and several were in the position of the old woman who lived in a shoe—'they had so many children they didn't know what to do!' How those frail, slender, young women contrived to lug about such heavy babies—often one on each arm, or one in arms, and the other toddling below—was a mystery to me. And how, upon the moderate wages of porters and such-like underlings, those young fathers ever contrived to feed and clothe their families, to say nothing of education, equivalent to their own—which I found on talking with them was above the average of working men—well, I came to the conclusion that they must be a remarkably industrious race—these Drones—and must have a large amount of faith in Providence, or in the hands through which Providence commonly works. Ay, that was it. One small fact lay at the root of all.

"It came out quite accidentally: no toast

betrayed it; no speechifying: no more than in any ordinary family meal. But once, as I was passing round the table, I felt my hand suddenly caught. It was the sick young man, who looked in my face, and held me fast, with a pathetic earnestness.

"'Ma'am, isn't this a fine sight—a great sight—isn't it, now? Just look at 'em all round the table; such a lot of young people, and all so merry; and all going the right way—the right way,' he repeated. 'And look at him,' glancing at Mr. Holcomb, who was so busy talking that he never caught a word, 'but for him we might ha' taken the wrong way. He looked after us—ever since we were little lads—he did, ma'am, he did. If we're good for anything, it's all his doing.'

"The voice broke, the eyes filled—those poor dying eyes! They fixed themselves on his master with a mute blessing, which Mr. Holcomb never saw: but if he had, I think he would have liked it better than the loudest demonstrations.

"At nine o'clock the host took out his watch, remorselessly. 'Now, my friends, you have far to go, and lots of children with you. I must send you off. Your carriage stops the way.'

"It did 'stop the way' for twenty minutes or more, while all the active energy of us womenkind was required to find the little hats, and hoods, and capes, and dress the babies, or hold them while their mothers were dressing themselves. Then, everybody shook hands with every

one of us ; and, considering their numbers were over thirty and ours not under fifteen, the quantity of hand-shakes that were performed would furnish a long arithmetical calculation. There was also some delay in apportioning seats in the omnibus ; two or three young couples who had kept very close to one another during the afternoon, and who, I afterwards heard, were 'engaged'—though, with most rare and creditable delicacy, there had not been a single joke on the subject—persisting in sitting together, 'to admire the moonlight,' on the omnibus-top. A very laudable proceeding, common to young people in all ages. I only hope, in those thin muslin dresses, nobody caught cold. But that was their concern, not mine.

"The mothers and children were all, by general consent, packed inside—Tom handing them in, one after the other ; and at the last minute flying off like a whirlwind to fetch his own great-coat, with which he wrapped the invalid, and settled him comfortably—his little girl still in his arms—in the omnibus-corner.—(Not a bad fellow that Tom Holcomb, as I have before remarked.)

"At last the party were all stowed away, and the large omnibus reeled with them, inside and out. Mr. Holcomb's final question—'Are you sure you haven't left a baby behind ?'—awoke a shout of laughter, in the midst of which they moved slowly off, giving us as they passed the gates a hearty farewell in the form of good old English cheers.

"Dare I confess the next thing we did? It was to rush in a body to the dining-room; for, whatever our guests were, *we* were nearly starving! We said not a word till we had consoled ourselves with a hearty supper out of the remnants of the feast, and then we began to 'talk it over.' It was the candid opinion of both seniors and juniors that all had gone off well—that both entertainers and entertained had very much enjoyed themselves. Though, on comparing notes, and finding how awfully some of our legs ached with playing cricket and croquet, and how some of our poor arms were quite stiff with carrying babies, we decided that we had not spent exactly an idle afternoon.

"Finally, just as a refreshment before retiring to our most welcome beds, we, the elders of the party, emulated those young people on the omnibus-roof, and went out 'to admire the moonlight.'

"It was glorious! one of those nights, intensely clear, bright, and still, when the trees seem dead asleep, and the earth is as silent as the sky in the overpowering radiance; when the stars are almost put out, and the full moon walks, solitarily and solemnly, across those dark blue depths of space, which seem inviting us to gaze, up, up, far beyond where mortal eye can penetrate, unto the very footstool of God. A night, in which all earthly things look so small—so very small—and yet one feels they cannot be quite insignificant to Him, or He would not have taken pains to give us so much innocent happi-

ness in this world, and to make the minutest things about us so very beautiful.

"Our hearts were full, I fancy; for nobody spoke, until Mr. Holcomb said, in rather a low voice, 'I think this has been a good day.'

"'Yes,' I replied; and could not find a second word."

* * * * *

"Well, Aunt Patience, is that all?"

"What more did you expect? I told you you would not get a story. You have only got a bit of nature—the real history of one day, which I at least shall long remember—a 'good' day, as my friend Mr. Holcomb called it. Will anybody else, of the many worthy Mr. Holcombs who have so many servants under them, give just such another? It might be the better for both men and masters."

We all agreed that this was true. And therefore we have resolved to make public Aunt Patience's history of a Garden Party.

THE TALE OF TWO WALKS,

TOLD TO SICK CHILDREN.

No. I.—MY DOG AND I.

WHEN one is ill, the last person it is advisable to think about is oneself. It does no good ; for we keep on growing either better or worse all the while, and it only makes us a weariness to ourselves, and a trouble to other people. Sometimes, when pain is sharp, and sickness very heavy, it is impossible not to think about oneself; but the sooner one escapes into other thoughts the better; and our thoughts should take us out of ourselves—away from the weary body, which perhaps cannot stir from bed or sofa, the dull sick-room where we are familiar with every line of the patterned paper, every angle of the furniture. The more we can shut our mind's eye upon the things around us, and open it upon those which, being invisible, we can

look at whenever we please, the better will it be for us all.

Yes, my poor sick children, we sometimes keenly enjoy hearing of pleasures in which we cannot actually share. When I was a little girl I used to take walks with a blind old man, not born blind, but become so gradually. He knew every inch of the country, which was a specially beautiful neighbourhood; he would stop me at particular points, saying, "Now show me that view!" And I told him exactly how it looked —how this larch-wood was growing green, how the sun was shining across that angle of meadow-land, how the seven firs on the hill-top stood out sharp against the sky, and so on. How he would enjoy it! often even correcting me in my description, so vivid was his remembrance of what he once used to behold, and the pleasure of which remained to him still.

And long afterwards I knew a lady, who had not walked for many years, who then thought she would never walk again, yet every day in my rambles she used mentally to follow me; I bringing home to her in a basket a little bit of every kind of vegetation that sprang newly up —for it was April—from the first buds of yellow coltsfoot, or celandine, or anemone, on to the time of primroses and cowslips,— when we parted. She used to make quite a garden in her room, that bright little room which was, to me at least, the pleasantest in the house, arranging her mosses and lichens and bits of ground-ivy, with the most exquisite

taste; she said the sight of them made her so happy, that she could imagine every place in which they grew, and could follow me in my walks until it was almost as good as if she took them herself.

Now this is the kind of imaginary walk I would like to take with you. My poor little ones, try and forget your pains, and have a stroll with me, over paper and print, all among real places and people and things, for I will promise not to tell you a word that is not true.

And first, as to "My Dog and I." You would perhaps like to know who the "I" may be? Well, it is a person who likes, and is usually not disliked by, young people, whom she always finds good company, and gets for a walk whenever she can. Otherwise her chief companion is, next to a child, the best companion possible —a dog.

Now let me paint his portrait for you. He is a black, long-eared, long-tailed, and very shaggy Scotch terrier—at least, that I believe to be his breed, though whether he is valuable or not I really do not know. Nor can I say whether connoisseurs would call him handsome. From the total silence of my friends on the subject—praising him as a "good dog," an "intelligent dog," but never complimenting him on his beauty —I am afraid he has not much to boast of. But he is beautiful to me. When he comes bounding up to me, with his keen, loving, sagacious eyes, his curly black hair—all but the breast and feet, which, when he is clean, give him a most gentle-

manly appearance of white stockings and white shirt-frills—I think him the handsomest dog in the world.

For he loves me, and I love him; he is faithful to me, and I am mindful of him. I make him obey me, since that is for his own good as well as mine; but I never wantonly ill-treat him, nor wound his feelings in the smallest degree. When he is hungry, he is never tantalised to beg or do tricks; if thirsty, he knows where to go for his bowl of water, which is always full. And I strictly keep my promises to him, as I would to a human being. If, on going out, I say to him, "Lie there till I come back," I always do come back, and he waits in perfect faith, assured that he will not be left forlorn. In short, I deal with him according to the law of kindness, the only safe one for either man or beast. Consequently he is so human in his affection that I sometimes call him my Black Prince, and declare that if I were to cut off his head and tail—as the king's youngest son did to the white cat in the fairy story—he would certainly change into a handsome young prince, and devote himself to me for ever. Still, there might be a risk in the experiment—I might lose my dog and not find my prince—so I shall not try it just at present.

Imagine him, then, my children, as he sits watching me put on my bonnet, his head a little on one side, his eyes gleaming from under his shaggy black eyebrows, and his tail tapping the floor in a quiver of excitement, till I give the

final permission, "Yes, my man, you shall go."

Then, how he leaps! with all his four feet in the air; deafens me with wild ecstatic barks, and bewilders me, as I am putting on my boots, with unavailing but desperate attempts to kiss my foot or my hand. At last I am obliged to speak to him quite sharply, and then he subsides into temporary composure, broken only by an occasional whine of delight and entreaty, until we open the door—we, for he jumps up and licks my fingers at the handle—and go out.

To describe the ecstasy with which he bounds along the road, coming back at intervals to leap after me and take my hand in his mouth in a caressing way, barking all the while furiously, is quite impossible; and probably all dogs are the same as my dog, though I am inclined to think him the one dog in the world.

He and I take our way down the solitary road —quite solitary, for we live at a sea-side place, whence, during the winter months, all the inhabitants disappear; and this is January, with a dry, black, biting January frost, which turns our usually muddy road into crisp cleanness. Not a bit of snow is to be seen, though there is a slight rime on the grass blades and the topmost twigs of the hedge; otherwise the frost is so fierce that this brilliant sunshine, coming out of a sky as blue as June, does not affect it at all.

The bare trees stand up motionless, for the air is quite still, but of the abundant animal or vegetable life that used to meet us in our walks there

is hardly a trace, except the one little robin that hops about on the hedge or across the footway, scarcely a yard from my dog's nose. He is not a bit frightened, either of my dog or me—hunger has made him tame. Now he has flown back to the hedge, and sits there, ruffling up his feathers till he looks as fat and round as a ball, his bright eye fixed on me, so close that I could almost take him in my hand, or put salt on his tail, after the approved method of catching birds.

But no, my little friend, for I am well acquainted with you; you have haunted this hedge-corner for weeks past, and until this frost began you used to sing till one could almost fancy it was May; and as soon as the least mildness comes you will sing again, you pretty blithe creature, making the best of everything, as we all ought to do.

Bless me! I thought my robin was the only bird abroad, but here is a flock of chaffinches. Probably one of the last brood of the season, which instead of separating keeps together, a troop of wandering brothers and sisters, all winter long. And what is my Black Prince barking at so furiously in that field? Rooks? —yes, there they are, rising in a body from the newly-ploughed field, wheeling round and round or hovering like a cloud above it, and finally settling on the nearest tree, which they cover entirely, hanging on its bare branches in black dots, which show sharp against the sky, like some extraordinary kind of fruit. There they will remain, making a great clatter, and cawing

and clapping of wings, till we have gone safely past, then down they will drop again upon the field, marching about it after the peculiar solemn fashion of rooks. Never mind, the oats are not yet sown; they will do no harm. Perhaps good.

See!—there is another bird; sailing too high for my dog to bark at. It is not exactly a stranger, though we do not see many of them unless in stormy weather, when they are driven inland often much farther than our estuary. Some of you, my children, may have read in Mary Howitt's poems, one beginning,—

> "O the white sea-gull, the wild sea-gull,
> A joyful bird is he."

Going on to say how—

> "The ship, with her fair sails set, goes by,
> And her people stand to note,
> How the sea-gull lies in the heaving sea,
> As still as an anchor'd boat."

Well, this is the creature, and a beautiful creature he is too, if we could examine him close; but he keeps circling and circling over our heads, so that we can only see his white breast, and his great white flapping wings tipped with black, on which he goes sailing miles and miles out to sea, and beholds wonderful sights, such as we ourselves never shall behold. And probably he has built his nest, with myriads of others, on the top of a great rock in the middle

of the sea, some fifty miles from hence, and only comes paying occasional winter visits to our pretty little bay.

I wish I could show you this bay. It curves in suddenly from a line of rocky coast—rocks of that picturesque sort which geologists term "conglomerate." It is shingly, not sandy, and except a few occasional masses of sea-weed, and the melancholy bits of drift-wood which imply a wreck somewhere, some time, we rarely find any very curious things; except the unfailing curiosities of every sea-shore, the ebbing and flowing of the tide, the shells clustering on bits of rock, the strange creatures—medusæ, for instance—which go floating about on the top of the waves, or lie as deep down as you can see beneath the clear water. And then there is the view—the broad blue estuary—the line of mountains beyond; but I could never paint that in pen and ink.

My dog has no eye for the picturesque, but a very sharp one to his own pleasure. He knows as well as possible the turn down to the bay, where I give him his daily swim. He stops, barks, runs forward, then turns, looks at me and barks again. He says, as plainly as a dumb beast can say, "Won't you come?"

Well, my dog, I will; though I have not your passion for sea-water in January; though I shall get my hands all wet and cold with handling that kail-stalk you are so eager to swim after; and though, after you come out, you will assuredly jump upon me, and shake yourself into

a perfect watering-pot on my gown, still I'll bear it. Come, we'll go.

I pick up the kail-stalk and a piece of drift-wood which he has been eyeing and barking at; he plunges in after both like a hero, comes out dripping like a drowned rat,—then throws himself upon me, overwhelming me with gratitude and salt-water. "Well, that's enough! and now be a good dog and come away."

It sometimes strikes me, when I see my dog's paroxysm of grateful joy for the smallest favour —his obedient relinquishing of benefits denied, his contrition when he does wrong, and is told to "walk behind me," abject penitence depicted in his head and ears, nay, his very tail; his ecstasy when I forgive him, and speak kindly to him again—it strikes me, I say, that many of us might take a lesson from a poor brute beast.

But I promised not to preach, and shall keep my word; only sometimes you must let me have my little say in passing, as I should if we were really walking together. But for the most part we shall take these walks as country walks are best taken, with one's eyes open and one's mouth shut.

Our bay is a perpetual pleasure to me. It is calm enough now, and yet I have seen the waves come rolling in several feet high, breaking over the rocks and the little wooden pier in perfect showers of spray; to-day, however, they just come rippling in lazily, each curling over with a soft "thud" on the beach. Beyond, there hangs over the river—we call it a river, though the

opposite bank is six miles off—the stillness of intense frost. Days since, the mountains disappeared in a white haze, into which the sun is just dropping, to reappear as a round red ball like molten iron, which dips slowly into the waves, dyeing them a deep blood colour.

I notice these things because, children, I want you to notice the like, walking everywhere, as I have said, "with your eyes open." Then, oh! the beautiful and wonderful things you will see every day and every hour! I leave you to find them out.

Ay, and so you would, even on a winter day like this, when people who know nothing of the country think it "dull." Dull?—why every minute we are discovering something new,—my dog and I.

He takes me along the shore-road, which is divided from the sea by a narrow belt of trees and brushwood. There he goes searching about, fancying he has found one of his old familiar rabbits; but they are safely hidden in their holes up the glen, down which the noisy burn comes tumbling, tumbling, till it joins the salt-water just here. For our seaboard is not barren nor bleak, but rich with vegetation to the water's edge. I have often seen primroses and hyacinths growing to within a yard or two of high-water mark, and mingling their woodland odour with the salt smell of dulse and carrageen.

Passing the glen, where I shall take you a walk some day, children, we come to a range of rocks gradually rising to thirty or forty

feet, along the base of which the shore-road runs.

These rocks are very curious. They have evidently been the ancient sea-margin; that is to say, the estuary has been level with their tops, instead of, as it now is, many feet below. This gradual receding and advancing of the sea, leaving one shore high and dry and undermining or overwhelming another, is a very remarkable phenomenon. Scientific men might study it here with advantage; but we who are not learned, but merely simple observers of nature, can only walk under, and look up at, those great perpendicular rocks—some bare, some covered with birch-trees, whin-bushes, and heather—and wonder how many centuries it took the sea to slip away, leaving, what must once have been its wonderful bottom, but which has now grown into a pretty shore, fringed with the richest vegetation, especially ivy, mosses and ferns.

Ours is a grand country for ferns. The humidity of the climate makes them grow everywhere abundantly. You find them lurking in every cranny where it is possible for a fern to grow. Even now, in this dead season of the year, many of them are beautifully green. So are the mosses; and, mixed with brown lichens and yellow fungi, they are almost as pretty as flowers.

But we have to do at present with these rocks, which are a perpetual wonder and delight to me. I do not know what their "formation" may be, geologically; but I never look up at them in

their curious jagged outlines, without thinking of the time when this great river was level with their tops, emptying itself seaward—not, as now, through two lines of busy towns, and pleasant coast villas, strung in dots, like a long white necklace, on either side the blue waters,—but flowing solitarily through primæval forests, inhabited by antediluvian or pre-Adamite beasts: creatures such as may be seen in the Sydenham Crystal Palace gardens, made in Portland cement, and set to look as if they were walking, squatting, crawling, or climbing—uncouth, grim monsters, which, we fancy, must have peopled an equally queer and monstrous world. But of that period now the most learned geologist can teach us little. We can only trace the evidence of it in these rocks, gradually worn away, some into smooth sloping surfaces, some cut down perpendicularly, as accurately as if it had been done with a hatchet.

A few masses are left standing separate from the rest. One in particular, half-covered with vegetation, looks more like a fragment of masonry, or bit of an old ruined castle, than the handiwork of Nature alone.

Nature, indeed! What strange pranks has she been playing since last week, when I came along this road! There, every fifty yards or so, was the sound or sight of water, for ours is a watery country; from above or beneath we never have any lack of it. Now, every drop of water is turned into ice; every road-side runlet, or singing burn, or leaping waterfall—nay, nay,

every little trickle that comes dripping from the roots of a heather-bush, is frozen, as if a fairy had suddenly passed by, struck it with her wand, and turned it, just as it was, into hard, clear crystal.

The shapes it takes are infinite. First, there is a part of the rock so smooth that it holds not even a cranny where to grow a tiny fern. This has become one sheet of ice, glittering in the sun. Elsewhere there hang festoons, a yard or two deep, like glass curtains, from which depend innumerable tassels, or ear-rings, or spears—whatever you choose to liken them to—perfectly rounded, and, however thick they may be at the root, tapering uniformly to a point, slender and sharp as a needle. They are all sizes and all lengths, from an inch to two yards, and their numbers are numberless.

And now we come to the most curious sight of all. There is a place where the rock is hollowed inward, so as to form a shallow cave. This cave is completely festooned with icicles. Some are of great size, perfect sheaves of spears, united at top in a solid mass. Here and there, where the cave, which faces south-west, has been entered by the sun's light, they have slightly melted; but the drops which fell have speedily frozen again, and underneath each sheaf of downward spears a new array of upward spears has risen from the ground to meet them. Standing here, under this roof, which used to be so damp and green, or glistening with oozing water, but is now turned into a fairy palace, we can conjure

up what Arctic caverns and icebergs must be. And in trying to break off one of these spears, but finding that, though it is only two inches in diameter, my hand is as weak against it as against a bar of steel, I can understand better the awfulness of that frozen sea, which has strength to lock up in its deathly bosom huge ships, and that not for weeks or months, but for whole years.

As I walk on, many a thought comes, and many a story which I should like to tell you, my boys and girls—for girls love heroes as well as boys—of those brave sailors who have perished in the Polar deep, or come back to tell us of their exploits, perils, and endurances. But you may read them all for yourselves in McClintock's Voyage of the Fox, and in another book, interesting as a fairy tale, and simple as a story told at the fire-side by word of mouth, the Arctic adventures of the American, Dr. Kane, who volunteered to go in search of our own Franklin. The heroism of the man—he is dead now; he died not long after he came home—his care over and fidelity to his companions, his unselfishness, patience, and self-denial—all these, not showy, but silent virtues, betrayed rather than expressed in his plain, straightforward, sailor-like narrative, compose a history, from the reading of which every man, woman, or child, with a heart and a conscience, must rise up feeling happier and better than before. For surely, if no other good has been gained by these terribly tragical adventures in search of the North-west Passage, they

have taught one thing—how much for duty's sake men can do, and dare, and endure: ay, *endure*, which is not quite synonymous with *suffer*, one being active and the other passive. It touches one's inmost soul with a thrill far higher than grief or pity, to think of what these men endured, resisting to the end. What noble privations mutually borne—what brotherly clinging together of officers and crews, forgetful of all difference of rank—what heroic concealment of pain, each holding on through sickness and weakness to the last extremity, in order to help and not burthen the rest! The glory of such histories can never die, nor the good influence they leave behind, no, not even though the men themselves may have long since left their bones to bleach under icebergs, or to be scattered by Arctic bears over leagues of impassable snow.

But these thoughts are growing too solemn. My dog evidently considers so. For ever so long he has been trying to catch my attention, running to and fro, barking, and looking up entreatingly to me. Ah, I see he is, like myself, very thirsty, and there is no water, only ice. Well, my man, we must just accommodate ourselves to circumstances. Come here. I break off an icicle and present him with it; he smells, and turns despondently away. He thinks I am cheating him. So, now, let us try how far his trust in me will go, and how far his reasoning powers will help his instinct in a matter upon which he has certainly never experimented before, for all his winters have been spent in a town, and I doubt

much if he ever saw real ice until now. "Look here, my dog." And I break off an icicle, put it into my mouth, and show him distinctly that I am eating it and liking it, then hold it to his mouth. He regards me with a mingled expression of doubt and faith, but faith predominates. He takes a cautious bite, is astonished and charmed. It is his first experiment at eating ices, but is quite satisfactory. Between us, he and I consume two whole spears; he at last becoming so voracious, that he takes the fragments out of my hand, gnaws them, and growls over them as if they were bones. And every lump of ice which he afterwards comes to, he turns over and smells and bites at with the greatest enjoyment.

Certainly, my dog is the cleverest of all dogs, quite a reasoning animal. One thing touches me, as it always does—his unlimited trust in me. Well, my man, I think I deserve it, for you know I never restrict you wantonly in any of your harmless canine enjoyments, for I like to treat even my poor dog with that even-handed justice which is the best loving-kindness. And certainly you return it all, for you are the best companion at home and abroad that any fond brute could be.

Come, we must now bend our ways homeward, for the short afternoon is already closing. Lovely as these winter days are, they are brief enough, and we have the very shortest twilight. In summer it will be different; during June and July I have often been able to read until eleven

p.m., but now the afternoon seems, after sunset, to sink suddenly into night. Nay, even before the sun has set, a white haze, slowly advancing landward, blots out both the sea and the mountains, or rather where the mountains ought to be. In this frosty weather they often vanish for days together, but when they do reappear some wondrously clear morning, with snow on their summits, which the rising sun dyes all colours, oh, how beautiful they are! But I must give a whole chapter to my mountains, or take you a special walk among them some day.

Now we turn homeward together, my dog and I; he trotting first, so close to me that, though I can only distinguish something black moving through the haze, in the dead stillness I can hear the pit-pat of his feet; as no doubt he hears the steadier tramp of mine, and is satisfied. He does not bark; probably his spirits are depressed by the fog and the chilly air, which creeps into the very marrow of one's bones.

But never mind, my dog! We have had a glorious walk, and shall have another to-morrow. Though the night looks so gloomy now, we know it will soon be morning, when we shall start off together, you and I, ay, before it is daylight. For in these northern latitudes the mornings are as dark as the evenings. At 7.30 a.m. yesterday I found the stars still shining, and saw just over that wooded hill the crescent moon lying, with her horns downwards, just like a piece of silver set in the dark sky, while on either side

of her, two planets gleamed like great eyes out of the deep black-blue heavens. And gradually I watched the dawn come over the mountains, changing the darkness into grayness, and then into all sorts of colours—rose, lilac, and amber—until all the sky above, and all the earth below, became clear and distinct in the brightness of perfect day.

Was not this a sight to rise early for? And we shall see it again, my dog, to-morrow, though now we go home in the mist and gloom, and shut the wicket gate after us, thankful that we have a roof to shelter us and a good fire to creep to. And so good-bye, children! Are you glad or are you sorry to part at the walk's end with my dog and me?

THE TALE OF TWO WALKS,

TOLD TO SICK CHILDREN.

No. II.—THE FOX HUNT.

THIS time, children, it is only I who take you the imaginary stroll. My dog lives still in peace and prosperity, but he and I are undergoing a temporary separation. I have left him behind me, some two hundred miles away, while I wander southwards to a region in which climate and everything else form the strongest contrast to that wherein you took your last stroll with my dog and me.

The poor fellow seemed to have a foreboding that he was about to lose me for a time, and time must be a rather unknown quantity in doggish calculations. The night before I left him he crept after me from room to room, watching my packing with a sad inquisitiveness, as if to say, "Oh, please tell me what is going to happen?" And not many minutes before I

actually started (which I own to doing surreptitiously, during his absence in the cellar, searching eagerly for an imaginary rat) he came and laid himself on my gown-skirt, rolling over and over caressingly, pawing and licking my feet. Ah me! when I finally departed, still hearing him bark at the impossible rat, and knowing that he would soon come bounding back to the empty room, I felt not unlike a traitor.

Still it must be; and I looked forward to another happy meeting by-and-by, when I return to the familiar spot, only brightened by green leaves and unfrozen noisy waterfalls, and my Black Prince will again seek with me his natural felicities—the hunting of rabbits, birds, hedgehogs, crabs, and other amusements with which he enlivens our mutual walks.

Meantime I might, if I chose, find a substitute for my own dog, in one that is always volunteering to accompany me here. Let me spare him a word or two, for he is a very remarkable animal. He was mentioned to me as, "Our little lap-dog—a puppy only six months old," when the door opened, and in walked a gigantic deer-hound, as large as a young donkey; of the breed now very rare, to which Sir Walter Scott's Maida belonged; the finest specimen of dog kind I ever beheld, but a little inconvenient in domestic life. For instance, his paw thrown across my lap feels as strong and solid as the arm of a big boy; his head laid on my feet—as in his extreme affectionateness of disposition he is rather fond of doing—fairly pins me to the earth, and

when he jumps exuberantly upon me, he very nearly knocks me down. In a small room his large length monopolises one half of the fire-side, and when he turns round he produces an alarming disturbance both among people and furniture.

Yet he is a magnificent animal, with a head almost human in expression, and a shape of which every movement is more graceful than another. He would be a perfect study for a painter, and one here hunts him from room to room and sketches him in every possible attitude. I am always picking up stray bits of paper with portraits of this beautiful beast. He is a quiet beast too, and to see him playing with his particular friend, a Skye terrier, is quite a picture. The big dog opens his mouth wide enough to swallow the little one, who yet puts his head confidingly into it, when they roll over and over, giving caressing bites and an occasional affectionate growl, but never really quarrelling ; and they hang about and whine after one another, seeming to weary for each other's company, just like friendly school-boys. And by the bye, it sometimes strikes me, children, that if both dogs and schoolboys were brought up in an atmosphere of loving-kindness, they might do with a great deal less fighting and snarling than is generally supposed necessary, since even these two dumb beasts cannot live in this loving family where I now am staying, without living together in love also.

But much as I admire the deer-hound, he is not my own Black Prince, with his cheery bark,

his quaint ways, and his speciality of lovingness. Nobody lies in wait for me at my room-door, and nobody scampers after me into the open air; for the splendid animal aforesaid is rather inconvenient as a companion, both in the house and out of it. He has an unlucky propensity to mistake sheep for his native deer; and even cows, bewildered by his great size, seem to think him some wild animal, and run roaring about at the sight of him; so that in this pastoral country his company in the fields is very unadvisable. And in the villages he is far too particular in his attention to the children—bends down and licks their faces in a condescending manner, while they, unable to get away, stand petrified with terror. On the whole, grand as his appearance is—so much so that every passer-by turns round to look at him—my noble friend is better left at home,—where it was unanimously decided to leave him on the day about which I am going to tell you, when I and two friends went to see a fox-hunt.

You should know first something of the sort of country where I am; far away from sea, mountains, rivers, or any of the beauties which I described last time; yet it has beauties of its own. Though inland, pastoral, and agricultural, it is not flat, but tumbled about in a charming up-and-downiness which the natives politely call "hills." If they saw our hills! Still there is a wonderful beauty in these green rounded knolls, dotted with patches of brown bare woods; and in the little dales between, where usually runs,

not exactly a river or a stream, but a pretty brook, whose course can be traced by its fringe of osier beds. Then the colouring of the landscape, even on this February day, is very fine; red, ploughed fields, some bare, some across which the tiny blade of springing corn throws faintest possible shade of green; pasture fields dotted with cows, and intersected with hedges and hedge-row trees.

The trees form a great feature in this rich and luxuriant district. Even now, with not a leaf to be seen, there is no mistaking an oak for an elm, a beech for a chestnut; each keeps, down to the smallest twig, its law of individuality—its own special outline of trunk and branches, infinitely varied, and yet the same in kind; and already each is preparing to re-clothe itself for the coming year. The ash-trees are beginning to darken,—

"Black as ash-buds in the front of March."

The chestnut buds are growing "sticky;" yellow catkins are dropping from the willow, and those soft buds which the children call "palms," and carry about with them on Palm Sunday, are already visible. Along the hedges on either side of the road, runs a reddish shade, which will by-and-by turn greenish, and then brighten into that tender colour of young leaves, which six weeks or two months hence will flash out in sheltered places and gradually make all the hedgerows look as if they were blushing green.

Very pleasant is this clear, sunshiny, smooth country road, straight as one of the Roman roads, which are still to be traced in this district, as well as Roman camps on the hill-sides, and Roman villas and pavements among the valleys. This road may have been Roman for aught we know, originally planned in the days when we Britons painted ourselves with woad, and dressed ourselves in skins of bears and foxes. Which reminds me of the object of our walk, to see a "meet," or fox-hunt, this being a fox-hunting country.

Now, children, I am not going to discuss the question of fox-hunting. Some people think it a truly British sport, right and lawful and manly; others consider it exceedingly cruel and wrong. I myself have never thought much on the subject, and therefore am not competent to give any opinion. When you grow up you must judge for yourselves, and in the meantime you had better let the matter rest with older people, reading my description simply as a description of what was at least a very pretty sight. How far it is fair to turn into a "very pretty sight" the hunting of a poor beast to death, and whether, on the other hand, it is not allowable to destroy the farmer's greatest pest, are questions which I too shall leave to wiser heads than my own. We grown-up, as well as you little people, have often to learn that it is our utmost wisdom to confess humbly—"I don't know."

Well, there is the "meet." We can see it a

long way off,—an upland field, with woods behind it, in the which many foxes dwell. Last night, while the creatures were prowling about in farm-yards and other places, keepers went round these woods and stopped up their "earths," —which are great holes or burrows extending far underground. Consequently the foxes have no homes to shelter in, and will be more easily "found," as the phrase is. Good sport is evidently expected, for the road, usually so lonely, is thronged with people—fashionable people from the fashionable town a few miles off, and country people, who have come down from what the natives here call "the hills," in gigs, carts, or plough-horses, and on their own feet. They are rather a remarkable looking race, intensely Saxon, with the Saxon round, ruddy face, blue eyes, and flaxen hair; just as you might imagine the faces of Gurth the swineherd, and Wamba the jester, in Scott's "Ivanhoe," if you have read it (and if you have not, go and ask permission to do so immediately). They are mostly farmers, dressed in velveteen, with bright-coloured waistcoats, breeches, and leather-leggings ; or farmers' labourers, wearing the usual smock-frock. All are evidently deeply interested ; but in the quiet unexcitable way in which the British labourer does show his interest in things about him. They trudge soberly along, or stand in groups, staring at the grand folks in carriages, or the red-coated hunters, who every now and then gallop past, and enter the open gate of the field where the "meet" is held.

A more picturesque sight could hardly be seen than this sloping field, over which a hundred or more people, on horseback and on foot, are now moving. Sometimes a horseman darts out of the immediate circle and gives a canter round the field; and once there is great excitement. A hunter is thrown, his horse rolls over him, and there is a moment of breathless alarm, till the poor gentleman extricates himself by pulling his leg out of one of his top-boots. The horse springs up and dashes wildly about the field with the bridle dangling dangerously under his feet, a beautiful, fierce, frantic creature, whom nobody dares to catch. However, it is caught at last, and its master, with true English pluck, goes after it (limping a little, and rubbing legs and arms, but otherwise unhurt), caresses, soothes, and at last remounts it, looking very white, but still riding fearlessly and calmly, as a bold, British hunter ought.

This little episode has greatly excited both us, and our neighbours on either hand—a carriage full of little girls with their governess, and a couple of boys on Shetland ponies accompanying papa on his big horse,—papa who has evidently given up hunting in order to take his little sons to the "meet." We have scarcely settled down when the hounds appear, coming down the hilly road in a compact body, headed by the whipper-in, or "whip," as he is technically called. They are regular thorough-bred fox-hounds, not an attractive sort of dog to my mind, being all alike, with no individuality about

them, and kept necessarily in such strict order, like a pack of wild beasts, that no special affection between dog and master can be possible. They obey the "whip," with a whip in his hand, but they take no notice of him or anybody; rushing on with a savage unanimity of delight, as if they already scented the creatures they were born and reared to exterminate.

After them rides their owner (and people say they cost him 10,000*l.* a year), the master of the hunt, a handsome, grand-looking gentleman, whose diamond ring flashes as he reins up his horse, which is a perfect picture for breed and beauty. Probably nowhere in the world could there be seen a much finer collection of splendid hunters, snorting and champing, and seeming as eager for the chase as their riders.

And now, all being assembled, the master of the hunt gives the signal to "throw off," which means letting the dogs loose to find the "scent." This is easy enough, for, even to human beings, the odour of a fox is so strong that when one has crossed the road you can know it by the scent he leaves behind him for ten minutes afterwards. The hounds rush forward into the wood, whence almost immediately rises first one yelp, then another, and finally the whole pack "give tongue." The fox is "found,"—he "breaks cover;" we cannot see him, but we can hear the "view halloo" of the huntsman across the green field, and we can trace the dogs rushing forward in a compact mass, so close together that, according to the saying of the keepers, you

might "cover them with a tablecloth." One after the other the huntsmen dart away, galloping so fast that their horses seem to lie level along the grass, with legs stretched out before and behind, then diminishing to mere specks of scarlet, black, or grey, and so vanishing over the top of the hill.

The hunt has begun. Poor Reynard—or "sly Reynolds," as they call him in these parts—I wonder what will become of him!

Nobody knows. In a very short time the field where the "meet" was, is totally deserted. Carriages and horsemen move lazily up and down the road, the foot people hang about, wondering what direction the hunt will take, which, seeing it all depends upon the will of the poor fox, and none of us know "sly Reynolds's" mind, is a matter of pure guess-work. We eagerly watch both the hill-side and the valley below, listen for the "view halloo," the distant yelp of the hounds, and fancy often we catch a glimpse of scarlet between the trees.

Whether fox-hunting be right or wrong, it is certainly very exciting. The little pale boys on Shetland ponies, apparently recovering from illness—for their papa has just administered a glass of wine a-piece out of a flask in his pocket—flush up with delight as they ride to and fro. Some village youths of our acquaintance, and even youths of higher class, are seen tearing up the valley, having followed the hunt on foot, ancle deep in mud, and torn with briars. As some of our companions—staid gentlemen now—own

to have done when they were boys, making short cuts across country, and running for miles in order to keep up with the hunt and be "in at the death," which, with pride they avouch, they not seldom were. Bravo, lads! whether gentlemen or ploughmen. This is the good thing in hunting and all field sports,—they teach the spirit of adventure and endurance. And that it is which carries our British youth through the Indian jungle, the ice-fields of the Arctic circle, the Australian bush, and the deathly swamps of Africa,—anywhere, everywhere, to colonise, subdue, or civilise the world.

But the hunt has evidently disappeared. Reynard, wise beast, has led them far away from his native wood and his stopped-up earth. All the company are riding or driving off, and shortly ourselves, and those two labourers in the osier-beds who have been cutting osiers the whole time without once looking up—poor men! perhaps their day's wages depend on the amount of the day's work—are alone left in the quiet valley which an hour ago was so lively and so full of people.

Suppose we take our usual walk, just as if there had been no fox-hunt,—one of those delicious field-walks in the interval between winter and early spring, when the air is so soft, the sunshine so sweet, and the whole earth full of pleasant promise. True, there is a good deal of mud, wholesome, honest, country mud; we require the strongest of boots, and clothes that will bear rough usage, for we may have to

scramble over stiles, and through gaps in hedges, and amidst brushwood, and tree stumps, and brambles, and even occasionally subside to "all-fours." But we have a great delight in it; there is nothing like a regular field walk; when we have the country all to ourselves, and can talk and sing and shout to one another, merry as crickets, and free as air.

We go right up through a gate and a lane to the wood where the fox "broke cover," for we want to find his "earth"—the nearest approach to the den of a wild animal now to be seen in England, as he himself is the only remnant of our beasts of prey; except, perhaps, the badger. We listen, by the way, to our companions' account of a wood not many miles from this, one of the very few places in England where the badger still exists; what a curious place it is, all intersected with paths and lairs, and trodden down with foot-prints of strange creatures. We think we should very much like to go and see it, though we have no particular wish for a badger hunt. Man has, some writer observes, "a natural propensity for hunting something;" but I am not sure that woman has, and we are all women here, and our pleasures are of a different and more peaceful sort. Though we have left our childhood behind, some of us very far behind, still, my children, not one of you could enjoy more thoroughly than we all three do this day that beautiful wood which has already begun to dress itself for spring.

It is noticeable for how very short a time, even

in winter, vegetation lies absolutely dormant. In reality not for a day—the young buds being formed before the old leaves drop off. Not many weeks since, before Christmas, I found in another part of the country young green thorn-leaves (what children call "bread and cheese"), daisies, dandelions, and two abortive attempts at buttercups. And here in a sheltered nook, is actually a spray of honeysuckle, already green with this year's leaves. Another year!—another spring! God bless it to you all, my children, and to all good and happy people everywhere! And it must be a very hard and wicked heart indeed which will not rejoice that year after year while the world lasts God will always send us spring.

The wood is full of treasures, even so early as February, and although the trees are still black and bare; all except the juniper, which is an evergreen: the low beeches, with their rich brown leaves, which, though withered and crinkled up, persist in hanging on till spring, and the furze, which has already put out a few yellow blossoms. Then there is the ivy, very plentiful everywhere, and the queer bunches of mistletoe, which stick themselves, nobody knows how, in the topmost boughs of oak, poplar, or apple-trees. Why this odd parasite should prefer these particular trees to attach itself to, I cannot say, nor how it grows there, unless from a seed left by some bird. It is a very mysterious plant altogether,—especially at Christmas time.

Every tree stump is a nest of curiosities; dif-

ferent sorts of lichens, fungi, and moss, and tiny nurseries of plants which ought to have perished long ago. We find, with great triumph, a flourishing bed of wood-sorrel, and another of wood-ruff, both quite fresh and green. And in turning up a mass of dead oak-leaves, we come upon a tiny primrose root, embedded in moss, stretching out its small leaves just like a little baby out of a cradle. If it only had a flower upon it! How one of us would delight to paint it, the little yellow darling, peering out from the green moss and dead leaves. What a pretty picture it would make under the title of—let us consider—"A Discovery!"

But we are making discoveries every minute, heedless of the brambles which tear us, and the brushwood we keep stumbling over. We have filled our baskets with moss and our hands with great heaps of the long hart's-tongue fern. Ah! February is no time for carrying nosegays, for our fingers are growing pinched and numb. In spite of the bright sunshine, and blue sky, and white fleecy clouds, we are painfully convinced that it is not spring just yet.

Still, we enjoy ourselves so much that we have almost forgotten the fox's "earth," till we come suddenly upon a hole not unlike an enormous rabbit-burrow, scooped out under the root of a nut-tree, the soil being thrown up all round it, like an embankment. Strewn about are bits of fur and hair, and a feather or two, showing that the inhabitant is not quite such an innocent animal as a rabbit. Otherwise, it is a very quiet,

desolate den, and whatever murderous relics there may be at the other end of it, which is probably ever so far underground, there are none outside. The "earth" has evidently once been stopped up, and the determined fox has burrowed his way again into his familiar hole, where, perhaps, he has long lived in peace, and brought up a large family of little Reynards; for, we are told, young foxes were often to be seen playing about in this very wood, pretty and harmless as rabbits or kittens. But we see none now. In the breeding season fox-hunters benevolently or prudently hunt no more. So it was only old habit that drew "sly Reynolds" to this hole, if, indeed, its owner be the identical fox who lately flew before the hounds.

We are almost sorry for him, in spite of our memory of lost ducklings, fowls, and geese. He is tried and punished so deliberately, and so long after the offence, that we feel for him some of the sympathy which always attends great criminals in those horrible hangings which I trust you, children, will live to talk about as things belonging entirely to the past. Poor beast! bad as his character may be for cunning and cruelty, we almost hope he has escaped, and are trying to forget all about him and the hunt in listening to a thrush, the first thrush of the year, who had just opened his mouth from a neighbouring tree-top, and is pouring out his rich notes as if there was no such thing as pain or trouble in the world,—when suddenly we start, hearing close behind us a yelp and a howl.

Ah! it is the hounds. They come tumbling and tearing through the brush-wood. We see no individual dog, but a mass of black and white heads, legs, and tails; and a little distance in front of them is a small brown thing. So very small it looks! How it runs, doubles, turns, and runs again; then, as if driven by a sort of desperation, it seems to spring back right in the middle of the pack. They close upon it with that horrid universal howl, and it is never seen more.

At least, we saw it no more; for we got out of the way as fast as we could, feeling sick and sorrowful, wishing we had never been to the hunt. Was that the poor fox, that tiny creature, a mere ball of brown fur worried about among the dogs? What a small thing to be the object of so much excitement, the prey which lords and gentlemen, keepers and hounds, had followed for miles and miles? Well, fox-hunting may be very good sport, but I am not quite sure, children, that if I were a man I should enjoy it with a clear conscience, and I am very sure that I should not like to be "in at the death."

We were not, though it must have happened within a few yards of us; that is, if it happened at all. We heard afterwards a report that the fox had escaped—ran into his earth; and though two or three men were "digging him out" for some time, they failed to get at him. Let us hope it was so.

But for us, our pleasure in the morning's sight—the scarlet hunters, the splendid horses,

the musical-tongued dogs—was considerably damped. We felt relieved when they all vanished, which they did in a very few minutes, scouring the country in search of another fox. They left the wood, in its delicious solitude, to us and the thrush on the tree-top, who recommenced; happy bird! as soon as everything was quiet, and sang at the top of his voice as plain as bird's notes could say—"Spring is coming! spring is coming!"

Yes, though the roads are muddy, and the fields rather damp and dreary for the young lambs—look! there are two wee, toddling creatures, showing white as daisies against the green meadow! though for many a day our fingers will tingle and our noses get pinched; still, spring is coming!—The days are lengthening and brightening, the sunshine is growing stronger; I should not wonder if before very long, under the hedge we know so well, we might find, as some of us have found every year of our lives, a little, tiny, delicate white violet, to be followed in a day or two by hundreds more, till the whole field is fragrant with them. Further down it, hidden among the grass, we might already find those three little flat leaves of the tenderest, most delicate green, which show where, by-and-by, will rise up a flower, the very delight of our hearts—

> "Then came the cowslip, like a dancer at a fair,
> She spread her little mat of green and on it danced she."

—as she will dance next May by thousands

over this very field, and we shall drop on our knees to smell at her and admire her, just as ardently as we did—well, well, it matters not how many years ago!

Thank God, in one sense, we three shall be always children. For, I am certain, we shall never lose our delight in this beautiful world; in the day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, which He has ordained shall not cease, until He creates a new heaven and a new earth. What we shall be then, we know not; nor is it necessary for us to know; if it had been, He would have taught us. As it is, He teaches us instead by the daily experience of life, and in many other ways, some of which you also know only too well, my poor sick children!—the two hardest things on earth for any one to learn—not seeing, to love, and not wholly understanding, to believe.

THE END.

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